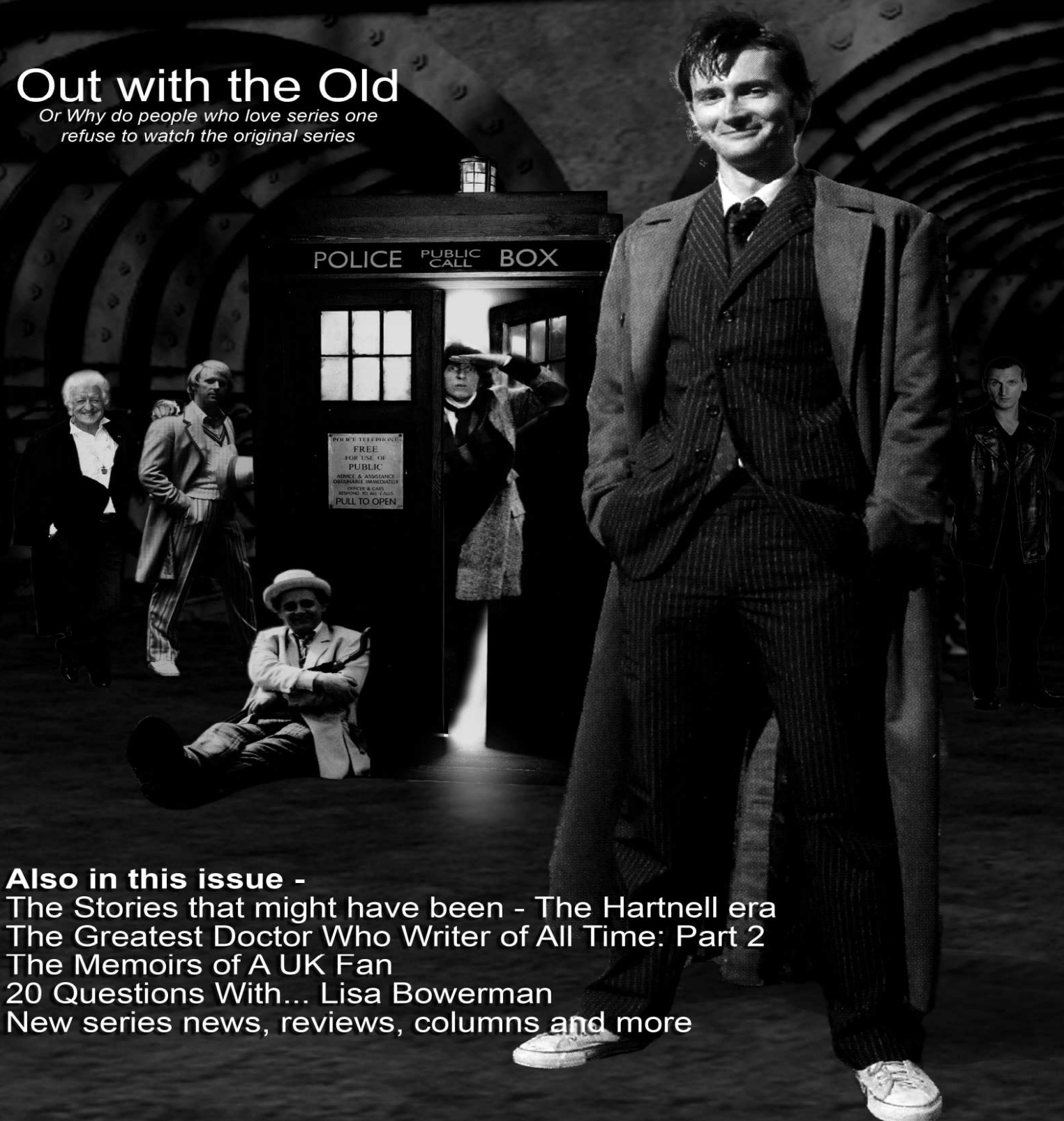


Who is David Tennant?

Out with the Old

*Or Why do people who love series one
refuse to watch the original series*



Also in this issue -

The Stories that might have been - The Hartnell era
The Greatest Doctor Who Writer of All Time: Part 2
The Memoirs of A UK Fan
20 Questions With... Lisa Bowerman
New series news, reviews, columns and more

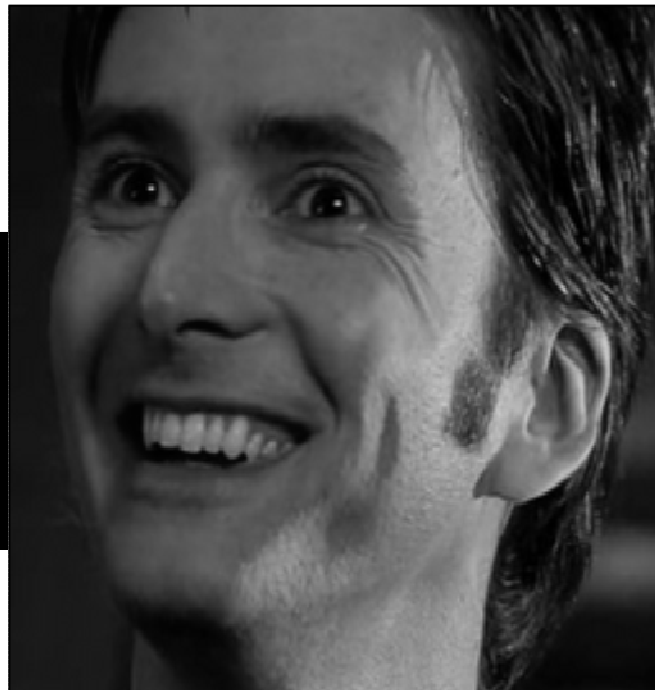


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issue 7
april 2006

20 **Cover**
Who Is David
Tennant?
*Drew Payne
introduces us to
the man behind
the 10th Doctor*



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editors notes



I THINK I LIKE THIS DOCTOR

David Tennant quickly proved to viewers that he was the Doctor.



as season two started already? Wow, I can hardly believe it. It seems like it was only just a short while ago that we were eagerly awaiting the return of the series in 2005, and here we are, somewhat spoilt, with another new season of our favourite television series. It's like a dream, because if you really think about it, it wasn't that long ago that there was no series on television and it looked like it would never return. Now here we are with another new season underway, with a third already in the works. We really are lucky you know.

While our British counterparts are currently enjoying the delights of the second season, we here in Canada will have to be content in knowing that the CBC will be screening the series come this September. Unfair? No, not really. Just a bit longer wait than last year. But I think most Canadian fans will understand the CBC's reasoning behind the delay. When you're one of the major financial supporters of the series, it's natural that you would have a vested interest in seeing the show succeed. Hence why the delay till September. The schedules will be free of hockey playoff's and the show can enjoy an uninterrupted run of thirteen episodes without having to worry that it might be bounced around the schedule because of an errant playoff. By waiting to broadcast the show in the fall, the series is guaranteed the largest audience possible. Personally I don't mind the wait, cause I know it'll be worth in the long run.

So what can we expect from the second season? Well if the resounding positive reviews of "New Earth" are anything to go by, then I think we're in store for a grand treat. In "The Christmas Invasion", David Tennant quickly proved to viewers that he was the Doctor. There was no doubt that he had taken to the role and totally immersed himself in it. Gone now are Eccleston's incessant silly grins and manic spouting of "fantastic". Here we have a Doctor in the mould of Baker, Pertwee and Hartnell. A Doctor that you can believe in. Personally I could never warm to Eccleston portrayal of the role. He frequently came across as unbelievable, with much of his acting seeming forced. His Doctor seemed to be an impostor - not the same character of the Doctor I came to love and know in the original series. I have nothing against the man personally, but I really felt he was terribly miscast in the part. It's funny, but as the Eccleston regenerated into David Tennant, I couldn't help but feel that this was finally the real deal. In the few short seconds, minutes, that Tennant was on the screen, I knew 100 percent that this was the Doctor. I just knew that he would turn out to be simply great in the part. And so far to date, I haven't been proven wrong.

Tennant totally impressed me in "The Christmas Invasion". I quickly warmed to his portrayal of the Doctor, so much so, I wanted to see more. So you no doubt can understand my excitement in seeing if my feelings are right. I'm looking forward to season two.

Cheers,
Bob

whotopia
the canadian doctor who fan magazine



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who stuff

APRIL 2006
THE KING MAKER

By Nev Fountain
Big Finish Audio/5th Doctor

DREAMLAND

By David Bishop
Sarah Jane Smith
Audio


INSIDE THE TARDIS

By James Chapman
Reference Book

THE SCIENCE OF DOCTOR WHO

By Paul Parsons
Reference Book

MAY 2006
INFERNO

BBC DVD: UK

THE FEAST OF THE DROWNED

By Stephen Cole
BBC Book: 10th Doctor/Rose


THE RESURRECTION CASKET

By Justin Richards
BBC Book: 10th Doctor/Rose

THE STONE ROSE

By Jacqueline Rayner
BBC Book: 10th Doctor/Rose

I AM A DALEK

By Gareth Roberts
BBC Book: 10th Doctor/Rose

GALLIFREY: FRACTURES

By Stephen Cole
Big Finish Audio: Gallifrey
Series Three

THE SETTLING

By Simon Guerrier
Big Finish Audio/7th Doctor

ALIENS AND ENEMIES

TV Tie-In

THE DOCTOR WHO FILES: SLITHEEN

TV Tie-In

THE DOCTOR WHO FILES: ROSE

TV Tie-In

THE DOCTOR WHO FILES: NEW EARTH

TV Tie-In

THE DOCTOR WHO FILES: THE DOCTOR

TV Tie-In

REGENERATION STICKER GUIDE

TV Tie-In


ACTIVITY BOOK VOLUME 2

TV Tie-In

TOMB OF THE CYBERMEN

BBC Audio

JUNE 2006
GENESIS OF THE DALEKS

BBC DVD: North America

REVELATION OF THE DALEKS

BBC DVD: North America

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By Stewart Sheargold
Big Finish Audio: Gallifrey
Series Three


SOMETHING INSIDE

By Trevor Baxendale
Big Finish Audio: 8th Doctor

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Big Finish Books

TIMELINK

By Jon Preddle
Reference Book



Letters

Thoughts...

Thanks for the sample issue of Whotopia 6!

Nice selection of photos and graphics, and while I pretty much disagreed with most of the praise in issue 6 for the new series, I did however agree with the "Five Moments" article.

But, those kinds of moments do not a good Dr. Who series make. They're nice touches, but unfortunately too many of these kinds of moments turned this new series into more of a Dawson's Creek or Buffy in Space; just another run-of-the-mill SF series like we've had for the last 10-15 years, where the SF element is only a setting or some sort of tech, and the actual genre of the show resides in the soap opera/western/war/mystery/cop show etc domain.

Dr. Who used to be the most consistently imaginative series ever, but then that was also when the focus was on the Doctor, and not this horrible idea of making the companion an equal. I think Terrance Dicks said it: "The show is never as interesting when the Doctor isn't on screen."

And here, we have tons of non-Doctor moments. So much so that it wouldn't be a stretch to re-title this series Rosey the Alien Slayer.

On CE: A friend of mine remarked "There's some guy with the Doctor's TARDIS." And I have to agree. CE interpretation of the Dr. seemed to consist mainly of grinning like Stan Laurel and saying "fantastic!" And yes, it cannot be overstated that one of the primary cool things was the doctor's asexuality. Dismissing this aspect of his character is a grave mistake indeed, I believe. A very refreshing break from every other character ever created just about, and such a counterpoint to the Captain Kirk-style of space hero. Well, that's gone too now.

While trying too hard to appeal to everybody at once, RTD has turned a once unique series into, as mentioned above, just another generic sexy soap opera with SF elements, sacrificing the pure SF adventure storytelling for romance and domestics."

-Greg Perry, via email

Issue Six

I'm enjoying issue number six. I especially liked the article on the character of Mickey--he's often under appreciated, and he has developed well as a character. I'm looking forward to future issues--numbers five and six have been terrific.

-Paul F. Engelberg, via email

Many thanks as always for the latest issue of

WHOTOPIA which I received and enjoyed this morning, the best issue you've ever done I think :-)

-Gary Phillips, via email

Your fanzine and website look fantastic. I'm really interested in reading Whotopia. How can I easily get hold of the current issue, and possibly also a set of back issues?

-Paul Scoones, via email

Thanks for the compliments Paul. You can order issues by visiting the back issues section on the Whotopia website or mailing us at our mailing address on the inside cover.

Drop us a note anytime. We love to hear from our readers. You can contact us at:

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season 2 news

The BBC Press Office officially confirmed that Series Two will begin on BBC One on Saturday 15 April at 7:15 pm with the debut episode "New Earth".

The wait is over! David Tennant, the 10th Time Lord, and Billie Piper as his feisty young companion Rose Tyler, return in the eagerly anticipated second series of the award-winning new Doctor Who. The Doctor and Rose board the TARDIS for new adventures in time and space. But when they visit mankind's new home, far in the future, they find gruesome secrets hidden inside a luxury hospital. And an enemy thought long since dead, the paper-thin Cassandra, is out for revenge...

C21 Media is reporting the CBC network announced at the MIP broadcasters' conference in Cannes that it has agreed to become a co-production partner on **Torchwood**, the Doctor Who spinoff series, which it had already done for the main show. "The Canadian public broadcaster, which is already a co-production partner on series one and two of Doctor Who, has also agreed to partner a third season of the Timelord's adventures. Series two is due to air on CBC in fall 2006." The tagline reads: "Torchwood and Doctor Who are both produced by BBC Wales for the BBC in association with CBC."

DOCTOR WHO SERIES TWO

Doctor Who

Produced by BBC Wales

Executive Producers: Russell T Davies, Julie Gardner

Producer: Phil Collinson

Starring

David Tennant as The Doctor

Billie Piper as Rose Tyler

Christmas Special, plus thirteen 45-minute episodes

ONE: NEW EARTH

Writer: Russell T Davies

Director: James Hawes

Cast: Zoe Wanamaker (Cassandra), Camille Coduri (Jackie Tyler), Noel Clarke (Mickey Smith), Michael Fitzgerald (The Duke), Lucy Robinson (Frau Clovis), Dona Croll (Matron Casp), Adjoa Andoh (Sister Jatt), Anna Hope (Novice), Sean Gallagher (Chip)

The Doctor and Rose stumble upon a "plague farm" in the far future in the guise of a hospital run by evil cat people ... and involving their old nemesis Cassandra, who's still very much alive.

TWO: TOOTH AND CLAW

Writer: Russell T Davies

Director: Euros Lyn

Cast: Pauline Collins (Queen Victoria), Ian Hanmore (Father Angelo), Michelle Duncan (Isobel), Jamie Sives (Reynolds), Ron Donachie (The Steward), Tom Smith (The Host), Ruth Milne (Flora), Derek Riddell (Robert).

In Balmoral castle in historic Scotland, the Doctor must protect Queen Victoria from an alien onslaught: vicious werewolves that terrorize the countryside.

THREE: SCHOOL REUNION

Writer: Toby Whithouse

Director: James Hawes

Cast: Elisabeth Sladen (Sarah Jane Smith), Anthony Head (Mr Finch), John Leeson (K9), Noel Clarke (Mickey), Eugene Washington (Mr Wagner), Caroline Berry, Rod Arthur, Joe Pickley (Kenny), Lucinda Dryzek (Melissa), Heather Cameron (Nina), Benjamin Smith (Luke), Clem Tibber (Milo)

The Doctor is reunited with old friends Sarah Jane Smith



and K9 at a mysterious school overrun by the evil Krillitans and their Headmaster.

FOUR: GIRL IN THE FIREPLACE

Writer: Steven Moffat

Director: Euros Lyn

Cast: Sophia Myles (Madame De Pompadour), Noel Clarke (Mickey), Ben Turner (Louis), Jessica Atkins (Young Girl), Angel Coulby (Katherine)

The Doctor peers through time to the court of Louis XIV... in a Doctor Who love story across time. Or is it?

FIVE: RISE OF THE CYBERMEN

SIX: AGE OF STEEL

Writer: Tom MacRae

Director: Graeme Harper

Cast: Noel Clarke (Mickey), Camille Coduri (Jackie Tyler), Shaun Dingwall (Pete Tyler), Don Warrington (the President), Roger Lloyd-Pack (John Lumic), Andrew Hayden-Smith (Jake Simmonds), Mona Hammond (Rita-Anne), Colin Spaul (Mr Crane), Helen Griffin (Mrs Moore), Jules Bert (Photographer), Nicholas Briggs (Cyberman voices)

Two-part story

The Doctor and Rose face the terrifying Cybermen on an alternate Earth doomed to disaster!

SEVEN: THE IDIOT'S LANTERN

Writer: Mark Gatiss

Director: Euros Lyn

Cast: Maureen Lipman, Ron Cook (Mr Magpie), Debra Gillett (Rita), Rory Jennings (Tommy), Christopher Driscoll (Security Guard), Marie Lewis (Mrs Gallagher), Sam Cox (Bishop), Jean Challis (Betty), Jamie Foreman (Eddie)

England of the 1950's is attacked by an alien intelligence that travels through the airwaves on television broadcasts, and it's up to the Doctor to stop it.

EIGHT: THE IMPOSSIBLE PLANET

NINE: THE SATAN PIT

Writer: Matt Jones

Director: James Strong

Two-part story

Cast: Shaun Parkes, Claire Rushbrook, Danny Webb, Ronnie Jhutta, Myanna Buring, Will Thorp (Toby)

The Doctor and Rose visit a breathtaking alien world, a colony world where food and water is scarce... and where an old enemy awaits him, an enemy that looks like the Devil.

TEN: LOVE & MONSTERS

Writer: Russell T Davies

Director: Dan Zeff

Cast: Camille Coduri (Jackie Tyler), Peter Kay (Victor Kennedy), Marc Warren, Shirley Henderson

The Doctor faces the Abzorbaloff, a creature created by a Blue Peter viewer, as well as... the wrath of his admirers!

ELEVEN: FEAR HER

Writer: Matthew Graham

Director: Euros Lyn

Cast: Edna Dore (Maeve), Nina Sosanya (Trish), Abdul Salis (Kel), Abisola Agbaje (Chloe), Christopher Driscoll (Security Guard), Erica Eirlan (Neighbour), Tim Faraday (Dad), Stephen Marzella (Policeman), Richard Nichols (Driver)

The Doctor and Rose drop in on the 2012 Olympics in London.

TWELVE: ARMY OF GHOSTS

THIRTEEN: DOOMSDAY

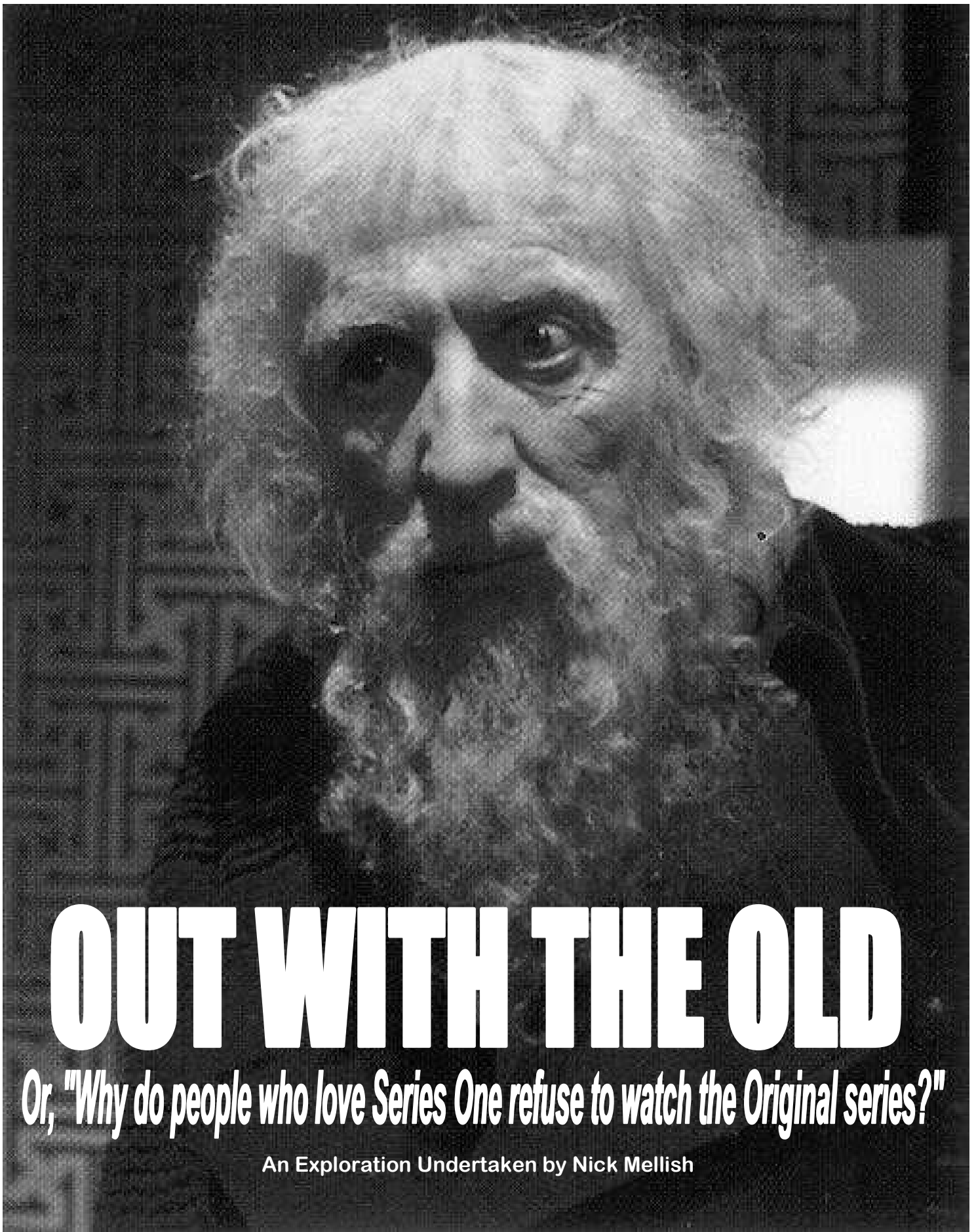
Writer: Russell T Davies

Director: Graeme Harper

Cast: Tracy Ann Oberman (Yvonne Hartman), David Warwick (Police Commissioner), Raji James (Dr Singh), Derek Acorah (himself), Trisha Goddard (herself), Barbara Windsor (herself), Adam Shaw (Morris), Freema Agyeman (Adeola), Hadley Fraser (Gareth), Oliver Mellor (Matt), Rachel Webster (Eileen), Takako Akashi, Hajaz Akram, Maddi Cryer, Anthony Debaeck, Paul Fields, Kyoko Morita, Andrew Ufodu.

Two-part story

The Cybermen have awakened in our universe, and together with something from the Doctor's past, the Earth isn't safe...



OUT WITH THE OLD

Or, "Why do people who love Series One refuse to watch the Original series?"

An Exploration Undertaken by Nick Mellish

19:00, England, Mellish Household: *Rose*, the first Episode of Series One of *Doctor Who* is transmitted on BBC 1. *Doctor Who* is back. I smile. A lot.

19:45, England, Mellish Household: My mobile telephone goes off with a text message. It is from a friend and fellow-fan saying hoe much he liked it. Mid-way through reading it, I receive another text message... then another, then another, and then another. I've never felt this popular. My phone eventually cannot take any more abuse and dies.

20:05, England, Mellish Household: Much TLC later and my mobile is nice and healthy again. I begin to scroll through the messages:

Doctor Who was brilliant!

Colour me a convert- that was amazing!

Did he always say "Fantastic?"

Billie Piper was 'Londoning' her accent up- great stuff though!

Can you get four pints of milk? Oh, and it's your Brother's Birthday soon; think about getting him a present.

That last one was from my Mum. I quickly run outside.

Four Pints Of Milk But No Birthday Present Later...

I cannot quite believe the reaction to *Rose*, though I am obviously happy. These messages have— on the whole— not been from fans of the old Seasons, but are from people who have simply loved what they've just seen.

In weeks to come I will get asked: when are the Daleks returning? (This I get asked numerous times); What was the name of the Doctor's home planet? (This I get asked even more); What is an Empty Child?; Is it true that Christopher Eccleston's going to change? (No, but the Doctor is); May I borrow your videos of Series One? (Yes, of course!)

Praise seems to be fairly universal, though one person I know has started up a hate campaign targeted at *The End Of The World*. I am overjoyed; for the first time in my lifetime (I'm but nineteen years of age) *Doctor Who* is being seen as 'cool' by pretty much everyone I know. It makes a change from the years when people didn't know what *Doctor Who* was, or when aspects of it left people confused— one friend of mine even thought that Conventions didn't exist but were made up to take the piss out of fans. When I told her otherwise and that I'd been to a few, she was literally speechless.

England - Sometime July-ish

I am talking to people who have enjoyed Series One and ask if they want to borrow any of my DVDs from the old Seasons but they decline. I ask why and they say that the New Series is great but the old one was rubbish. I am shocked, stunned and horrified.

If this was an Episode of Series One, this would



Above: A scene from 'Remembrance of The Daleks'



Above: A scene from 'Inferno'



Above: A scene from 'Bad Wolf'

be the point where the title sequence screams in and the title appears on your screen. Think I'll follow suit.

When I first decided to write this, the question of why people refuse to watch the *Who* of the past was one that roused my curiosity. However, this soon changed to one of mild frustration and— dare I say it?— maybe even anger of sorts. This is *Doctor Who*, my favourite thing in the whole world, and they were enjoying it now, so why not embrace the past? Surely it was always this good?

Well, yes, to my mind it was. Something like *Inferno* is still brilliant today; *Remembrance Of The Daleks* stands up just as well as it always did next to, say, *Dalek* itself, though in different ways obviously.

My point is this: Series One merely confirmed

in me what I had always known— *Doctor Who* really is as brilliant as I'd always claimed. Aside from a relief that I had not wasted years of my life on something a bit rubbish, the success of Series One also showed me that the show really can allow people to fall in love with it with ridiculous ease, as I did many years back. What was confusing me now was the reluctance people showed to dip into the show's past- why should this be?

I decided that the best way to find out would be to ask around.

I put down my mobile phone, ignoring the message from my Mum asking whether or not I'd bought my brother's Birthday Present yet- priorities Mother, I've got work to do! I wandered around, asking friends and friends of friends why they would not watch, say, Patrick Troughton in action. Various sentences were flung my way, but the following three were by far the most common:

"The old stuff looks cheap."

"I don't need to watch the old stuff: it was all explained to me."

"I don't know where to begin."

Two of these statements were ones I could relate to, especially the final one. When the film *X-Men* was released, I had the urge to read some of the comics but simply did not know where to start. I asked many people and got many answers and eventually had to take a gamble and see what happened (fortunately, it all made sense). In some ways, this ties in nicely with the second statement. One of the best things about Series One is how you do not need to have even heard of *Doctor Who* before in order to understand it, but it also seems to be one of the reasons people aren't interested in the past. Whilst I can understand how it is not deemed 'necessary', it still seems a little odd: there is a wealth of *Who* out there to be devoured, so why not dive into it? Surely using the 'not necessary' excuse just borders on laziness?

As for the first statement, I must say that I have always found this hard to relate to. Maybe it's because I have watched programmes and films with what are perceived to be 'below-par' special effects since a young age, but I don't see why the occasional poor effect should ruin someone's enjoyment of something. Even nowadays poor effects can slip through into the mainstream: check out the poor Blue Screen work in the children's film *Ella Enchanted*. Shocking stuff! Sure, poor effects can be distracting and maybe get a little laugh, but it is no reason to hate something or— as is the case here— to avoid it. In years to come, people will look back at Series One and comment on how cheap it looks. In my close-minded way, I decided that people should be more open-minded, then promptly died of Hypocrisy.

Just asking a few people here and there wasn't getting me any more to a satisfying answer I felt; I was getting little remarks that seemed to add up to what I already knew: people didn't want to watch the old *Who*, only the new stuff.



Above: The First Doctor

The reasons why, however, seemed to smack of excuse instead. I wanted something more concrete, so I decided to ask three people what they thought of this question. That, and my Brother's Birthday was now looming up quickly so I reasoned I'd get this out of the way before doing some shopping.

First off, I went to my friend Susie Rumsby, who is a prime example of these reluctant people: she has enjoyed Series One a lot, but will not watch any of the past Episodes. I asked her why this was, and found out that she fitted into the 'old stuff looks cheap' category of thinking:

I'd say that its pretty much down to all this rampant modernity we've been seduced by. I personally liked the new series because it had a very funny and clever script, witty cultural references (relevant to the current cultural climate and therefore to me right now), and some good action scenes and pretty special effects. It looked

like decent modern sci-fi, of an age that I definitely recognise.

*Okay, so why given the fact that I loved the new series so much, won't I watch the old one? (and please don't hate me for this by the way!) The major reason, and I'm not saying its a good one, why I don't particularly fancy watching the old series is that I pretty much think that as it is older, it will be clunky with crap special effects and a dated look and dialogue. There it is, sorry! When there's a new and shiny version to watch, it seems like a big step against progress to go back and watch TV that just can't offer as much, especially as some of it is even, *shudder*, in black and white.*

I whistled off lists of programmes she would have watched when she was younger to see if she felt the same way about them. She replied:

I have a feeling that if I had watched Doctor Who at all when I was growing up I wouldn't feel quite the same way, because it would have felt more appropriate to the time maybe, and then there's the inevitable nostalgia effect. For example, I loved the Narnia miniseries when I was younger, even though the special effects were not amazing seamless CGI. I even find myself quite militant about the new film, but this is because I watched it as a kid, I loved it and it sunk into my memories of childhood experience. Now nostalgia has kicked in, and I feel quite protective of the story and angry that they might mess it up. But I can completely understand why kids watching the new Narnia film today would be fairly reluctant to go back and watch a version made back in the early 90s, before they'd learned to use computers properly.

And then Susie said...

I guess my final reason why I wouldn't really want to watch the old show is that I'm aware that there's just tons of it. If I was going to start watching the old stuff I'd have no idea where in the bazillions of episodes to start watching. (Certainly not at the start: see my previously mentioned phobia of black and white) I suppose I'd need an expert to advise me.

So, I think that's about it. I'm basically just seduced by the new and pretty.

There I had it: as she so politely put it, new show good, old show crap J

Too much to watch, too old to be watched... these certainly seemed to be the main reasons for people's reluctance to dive into the world of *Who* and its many periods. No one wanted to experience *An Unearthly Tribe In 100, 000 BC* (or whatever you want to call it).

I realised that I was biased: I couldn't understand why people wouldn't want to watch it, and this was not only frustrating for me, but it was also crushingly unfair to everyone who had answered my questions so far. I decided that I needed the opinions of someone who was also a long-term fan, but who was able to be more objective than I am. I decided that the best way to find such a person would be to contact someone far more 'productive' in fandom than I, as they would have a better idea of how the ins and outs of making something *Who* related. I promptly ignored yet another message from my Mum regarding Birthday Presents and sent an e-mail off to Stuart Palmer, the man responsible for the animated adaptations of *The Dalek Chronicles*, from the pages of comics to VCD's.

In record time, I had an e-mail flung back:

Doctor Who 'classic' and Doctor Who 2005 (and onward) are really like distant cousins. They have the same basic set-up, they espouse essentially the same values and they feature the same icons, but it seems to me that they come at the basic idea from radically different places. Now I love both series, but I think I love them both for quite different reasons.

Below: The Ninth Doctor



YOU CAN TELL BY THE WAY I USE MY WALK...

A Short Ramble by Ian K Cimm

When Christopher Eccleston first hit our screens in *Rose*, people were looking for moments to prove that he really is the Doctor: not any old actor trying to be the Time Lord but really the Doctor.

Some people felt it from the first moment he appears, others got it later on when he confronts the Nestene Consciousness. I know some people who had to wait whole Episodes before they were convinced... for me, however, it came in *Rose*.

You know that bit where the Doctor says how the Earth is turning and then tells Rose Tyler to forget him and go home? Well, it didn't happen there. It happened straight afterwards as he was walking off. That one shot tells more about the character than anything else could possibly do. From being absolutely joyful and laugh-a-minute, the Doctor suddenly transforms into a man more serious than anyone else. He looks so focused as he walks, determined, deadly, dark. Gone is the man with the carefree attitude, here is the man with a killer stare, ready to tackle the monsters. Ready to fight. Something deadly is happening; something deadly has happened; it's time to get serious.

Since the arrival of the new series, I must confess I've had quite a bit of difficulty 'getting into' the original series and enjoying it the way I used to. It's not a matter of special effects or it looking shoddy in comparison or anything surface like that, but that the new series packs an emotional punch that the old seldom if ever matches. Of course, if I persevere past episode one, I do enjoy those old stories, but I find they have to be enjoyed on a different and emotionally shallower level. They are, if you like, rip-roaring adventure yarns. Even stories like 'Genesis of the Daleks' and 'The Caves of Androzani', I feel, only engage with the characters just enough to make you care **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**. Despite stretching over three, four, even ten or twelve episodes, their preoccupation is with event rather than character.

This was a familiar sounding comment. Many people on the Outpost Gallifrey forums had aired similar complaints, and whilst again I cannot say that this affected me, it certainly made sense. I continued to read:

The new series comes at it from the opposite direction, I think. It charts an emotional development or journey, and the exciting scrapes facilitate this development. There is no reset button at the end of the stories as the old series generally had (Season's One and Twenty-Six being almost uniquely different in that respect) and the lessons of one story are carried through into the next.

Therefore 'old guard' fans can be heard bemoaning the new series because the exciting scrapes are almost incidental to the real story (how many people complained that the Autons hardly featured in 'Rose', ignoring the title of the story and its true intent - it's not about an Auton invasion, it's about Rose finding a new way of life, and it is satisfying on that level). They accuse it (sometimes with some justification, I think) of being shallowly plotted. But that's shallow plotting from an action adventure perspective, not from the emotional drama perspective that it's actually coming from. In essence, despite some valid points, they are generally criticising an elephant for not being an emu.

The comments about *Rose* definitely rang a bell. A lot of people seemed to have somewhat missed the point with the invasion, or so I felt. The same happened with *Boom Town*, although to be fair this was partially down to its trailer at the end of *The Doctor Dances* which made it out to be a crazy, action-packed forty-five minutes.

So, the argument here was that the old Seasons and this new Series are different beasts; a bit like an Alpaca and a Llama— they look so alike, but they're not. Again though, my biased mind wouldn't accept it: is this not like enjoying two different genres of film? Can one who enjoys action films not also enjoy more heartfelt, emo-

Confusion

Not all of my conversations with people were successful. Below, I include a transcript of one that went ever so slightly awful...

ME: So, you refuse to watch the Old Series then?

THEM: I do indeed.

ME: Why is that?

THEM: Because it's in Black and White.

ME: But... hang on... you like Black and White stuff don't you?

THEM: Yeah.

ME: You watch films like *Clerks* and *The Man Who Wasn't There*, don't you?

THEM: Yeah.

ME: But they're in Black and White aren't they?

THEM: Yeah.

ME: Right... so let me get this straight... you refuse to watch the Old Seasons because some of it is in Black and White, but you like watching things that are filmed in Black and White.

THEM: Yeah.

sound of my mind caving in on itself

tional movies? I realised I was missing the point here, but couldn't help it. I was a bitter fan with a whole sack of chips on his shoulder.

confused over the whole affair. Dejected, I sat down and decided to watch whatever was in the DVD player at the time. Rather appropriately, it was one of the Series One DVDs. I sat back, relaxed, and popped on *The Parting Of The Ways*. It's all going nicely— I'm (still) laughing at all the jokes, feeling tense at the scary bits, and mentally swapping this Dalek Emperor visually for the one from *The Evil Of The Daleks* when the Doctor's 'answer phone' message to Rose comes on, and for the first time ever, my ears prick up and I hear it in a different way. I hear it in a way relating to the show itself.

Here was a programme that could have been forgotten, laid to waste. In years to come, people would see a Police Box, vaguely recall an ancient programme, and wander off. It would gather dust and fade away. But we said no. Just as Rose here refuses to let the Doctor die, so we— everybody— refused to let *Doctor Who* die. The fans did it by never giving up hope that, one day, it would come back; Virgin Publishing, BBC Books and Big Finish Productions did it by giving us all new *Who* to devour; but, most importantly of all, the general public did it without ever knowing it. They remembered what a Dalek was when they could all simply forget it, they took the mickey something rotten but in doing so kept the memory alive, they had enough faith to watch the new Series and embrace it once more: they had enough faith to love it once more.

And, all of a sudden, I realise that I was wrong. Very, very wrong. People haven't abandoned the Seasons of the past, they simply don't require them in the same way some fans do. A closer look at the Outpost Gallifrey forums revealed whole posts dedicated on where to begin with the old Seasons; for the first time ever, I heard a mobile phone that didn't belong to me go off with the *Doctor Who* theme tune; people were asking me about the Cybermen.

I was wrong to be so bitter; it's not a question of why people refuse to watch old *Doctor Who* stories but one of why they chose to watch the new ones. They chose to watch what they watch not because they hate the Old, but because they are besotted with the New. I suddenly realised that it doesn't matter if people only watch the new Series, because in doing so they are keeping the flame alight. Why should they love it all when they adore even part of it?

Okay, so perhaps people aren't going to watch *The Unquiet Dead* and *The Web Planet* with the same passion, but it doesn't matter at all because simply by loving some of it they keep the old *Who* alive, well, and not forgotten, not abandoned.

I smile, lean back and watch as Christopher Eccleston becomes David Tennant. *Doctor Who* is back; *Doctor Who* never went away; *Doctor Who* is loved.

I get a call on my phone: have you got a Birthday Present for your Brother yet? Oh, bugger.



And so here I was, bitter that the old Seasons were disliked, happy that Series One was loved, and

THE STORIES THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE HARTNELL ERA



William Hartnell as The Doctor

Over the 26 seasons that Doctor Who was in production, the writers bounced around numerous ideas as basis for stories. Some of these were one-off submissions that were quickly dismissed by the Doctor Who production office of the time, while others progressed to various stages of development until they were ultimately cancelled at the last minute for one reason or another. It can be a difficult job trying to 'discuss' these unmade stories in great detail. Often much of the documentation from the earlier years is long gone while obviously more recent seasons are far better documented.

It is interesting to note that each idea went through numerous stages of development. As already mentioned, some story ideas never made it past the initial pitch stage. These were likely rejected for numerous reasons such as deemed being unmakeable due to budget constraints, or the idea couldn't be developed into a plausible storyline. We shall never know why these ideas were rejected. A few of these ideas did advance beyond the initial pitch stage. Some may have seen some scripting take place. These may even have made it to the stage where they may have been considered as part of the line-up for a particular season, or even had a director assigned them. Then there are those ideas which were developed to the stage where they were seriously considered by the production team. These stories may have had partial or even full scripts written, and definitely were on the schedule for an upcoming season. They likely did have a director assigned to the story, and it's very likely that some basic casting may have taken place. But for some reason or another, these stories were dropped at the last minute and replaced with another story.

Over the next 3 or 4 issues we will try and document some of these stories so that readers can have some idea what stories might have been. We begin our journey with the **William Hartnell** era.

One of the first stories rejected occurred even before the series had gone into production. The first serial originally intended to launch the series was *The Giants* by CE Webber. The 4-episode story was originated as earlier as May 1963 when Webber had put together the series format guide. Featuring a completely different set of characters than those, which would appear on screen in *An Unearthly Child*, Webber's story told of teenager Sue and her teachers Lola and Cliff who meet a strange old man in the fog. Calling him Dr. Who, they discover that his home appears to be a police

box, but it is in fact a time machine that is larger on the inside than on the outside. Making their way into Dr. Who's strange device, wrong buttons are pressed and the four are transported to Cliff's science class laboratory, but reduced to just and eighth of an inch in height. There, Cliff and Sue are separated from the Ship and are menaced by a caterpillar, a spider, a student's compass and a microscope lens. They eventually manage to communicate with the students and their teacher and are returned to the time machine.

The first episode of *The Giants* was outlined in an revised version of the format guide dated May 16th, with the description of the concluding episodes added in a third version published on June 4th. Rex Tucker was assigned to direct the serial. Sue, Cliff and Lola would eventually become Susan, Ian and Barbara, while the idea of the Doctor being explicitly referred to, as "Dr. Who" would go effectively unused. Doctor Who's creator Sydney Newman disliked the use of the caterpillar and spider as 'monsters' and felt that the story lacked incident and character. However, it seems that it may have been the technical limitations of the outdated Lime Grove studio where Doctor Who was to be recorded that forced the abandonment of *The Giants* in favour of *100,000 BC*. Robert Gould unsuccessfully reused the miniaturization idea in a story treatment before it finally made it to the screen in the form of *Planet of Giants* by Louis Marks.

Another script from the very early days of the series was *The Living World* by writer Alan Wakeman, which featured the First Doctor, Ian, Barbara and Susan. The story reached the stage where a script for episode one was completed and on some documentation it was referred to as being a "pilot". Whether the story was intended to be the potential first episode of Doctor Who, or was merely requested by the production team to give them an idea on whether to commission Wakeman to pen the rest of the story was unclear. The story was however commissioned in mid-July 1963 after story editor David Whitaker had invited Wakeman to contribute ideas for Doctor Who.

When Anthony Coburn's *100,000 BC (aka The Tribe of Gum)*, was pushed ahead to replace *The Giants* in June 1963, Coburn was asked to supply a replacement for the second story as well, to be directed by Rex Tucker. Called *The Robots*, it was formally commissioned on July 3rd, around which time it was expanded from its original four episodes to six. *The Robots* was originally set on 30th century Earth, but by the end of July, its location had changed to an alien planet. The production team had grown increasingly unhappy with the storyline and on September 23rd decided to switch in the running order with the intended fifth story, *The Daleks*. In October, the scripts gained a new title – *The Masters of Luxor*.

The TARDIS is drawn by a signal to one of the moons of Luxor. There the First Doctor, Ian, Barbara and Susan, discover the world dominated by robots led by the Perfect One. The



The original TARDIS lineup: Barbara, Ian, Susan & the Doctor

Perfect One has been experimenting on people to discover the secret of life, and kidnaps Barbara and Susan – he plans to use them as test subjects before he drains their life force from them. The Doctor and Ian escape to the wilderness, where they find and reawaken Tabon, the scientist who invented the Perfect One, sending the robots out of control. The robots kill Tabon and destroy the Perfect One while the time travellers escape in the TARDIS.

Around December, *Luxor* was postponed until Season 2, at one point being considered for the sixth slot of Doctor Who's second production block. But by the end of 1964, the decision had been made to drop *The Masters of Luxor* from the schedule altogether.

Pleased by his scripts on *The Daleks*, the production office asked Terry Nation to submit more ideas for stories for production. One of the first of these was the storyline for *The Red Fort*. This 7-episode tale was intended for the first season where the time travellers become embroiled in the Indian Mutiny of 1857, when Indian troops rose up against the colonial officers of the British East India Company. The scripts were commissioned on September 24,

1963, but it appears Nation performed very little work on the story and the story was ultimately dropped on January 21, 1964. Nation eventually went on to write *The Keys Of Marinus* in its place.

In *The Hidden Planet*, the TARDIS lands on "the tenth planet" – a world identical to the Earth, but whose orbit around the Sun is diametrically opposite to our planet's, and which has therefore gone undetected. This world is very much Earth, but there are subtle differences: four-leaf clovers are plentiful and glass refracts oddly. Women are the dominant sex while men struggle for equality. The leader of the planet is Barbara's double, and rebels kidnap Barbara. Meanwhile, the Doctor, Ian and Susan are embroiled in the struggle for male suffrage. Malcolm Hulke first contributed this idea on September 2, 1966 after having been invited to contribute to the series in July. In mid-October, *The Hidden Planet* was pencilled in as the sixth story of Season One, then pushed back to seventh by the time of its formal commissioning on December 2nd, due to the insertion of *Inside The Spaceship (aka ?)* into the running order. A month later, the story had been promoted to fifth spot due to difficul-



Carole Ann Ford as Susan

ties with two other serials. Unfortunately when Hulke delivered his script for episode one in January 1964, the production team found it unacceptable and asked to undertake rewrites. (*The Keys of Marinus* was hastily commissioned to take its place.) Hulke was not happy being asked to perform the rewrites arguing that his script for episode one followed the guidelines as set out by the production team. As a result, Hulke asked to be paid extra for the rewrites, but this request was refused. After much discussion, Hulke finally agreed to rewrite his scripts in March '64. Subsequently, the second version was given the title of *The Year of The Lame Dog*.

By April, the story had been blocked in as the possible second story for Doctor Who's second recording block. By July, Hulke had rewritten the tale as a five-parter, and consideration was given to making it first in the second recording block. However, now that Carole Ann Ford had departed the series, it was felt that too much work would be involved in restructuring the story. There was also concern that the story lacked any monsters, which had now become viewed as a key component of the series science-fiction serials. *Story editor David Whitaker therefore abandoned The Hidden Planet* on September 24, 1964. Hulke later resubmitted the storyline to the production office following Whitaker's departure from Doctor Who, but Dennis Spooner once again rejected it on April 2, 1965.

Around the start of 1964, scriptwriter Morris Farhi sent Doctor Who story editor David Whitaker a copy of a Greek tragedy he was working on, as a sample of his writing. Whitaker saw something in the story that he liked and encouraged Farhi to try his hand at a historical adventure involving Alexander the Great. Although Whitaker only commissioned

INFORMATION TIDBITS



CE Webber's *Nothing At The End of The Lane* can hardly be considered a 'lost' story as it was suggested by Webber as the title for the first episode in the series developing format guide, circa May 1963. The story never reached more than brief summary status where teenager Biddy and her teachers Lola and Cliff meet a strange, amnesiac old man and discover his invisible time machine. Biddy, Lola and Cliff would eventually become Susan, Barbara and Ian, while the character of the old man would become the Doctor. Sydney Newman strongly disliked the idea of the ship being invisible. *The Giants* would eventually replace *Nothing At The End of The Lane*.

William Hartnell was interested in playing characters other than the Doctor in Doctor Who. To this end, he came up with a storyline called *The Son of Doctor Who*, where the Doctor encounters his evil time-travelling son, to whom he bears a remarkable likeness. The idea seems to have never progressed beyond discussions with the production office and Hartnell himself and was never developed further.

the script for part one, Farhi became overly enthusiastic about the idea that he elected to write all 6 episodes of *Farwell Great Macedon*. The story was to include the original line-up of the First Doctor, Ian, Barbara and Susan. The TARDIS materialises amidst the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, where the Doctor and his companions meet Alexander the Great. Four members of Alexander's retinue, however, are plotting to murder the king and successors so that one of their number, Seleucus, can ascend to the throne and allow them to return to their homeland. The conspirators try to frame the time travellers, but the Doctor and Ian succeed in a series of trials and Alexander's bodyguard, Ptolemy, proves their innocence. However, history cannot be changed and despite the Doctor's efforts to save the king's life by having Ian build an iron lung, Alexander dies while Ptolemy helps the companions escape to the TARDIS. Each of the 6 episodes were titled – *The Hanging Gardens of Babylon*, *The Wrath of The Greatest Grecian of Them All*, *A Man Must Die*, *The World Lies Dead At Your Feet*, *In The Arena* and *Farewell, Great Macedon!*, while Farhi had intended that the first episode would have explained the time travellers ability to understand other languages by having them hooked up to a computer that taught them Greek.

Initially, Whitaker felt that Farhi's scripts needed to be tightened up, but after the transmission of *Marco Polo*, the production office apparently decided to gear the historical adventures so they would be set on the periphery, rather than in the midst of famous historical events, in response to criticism from schools. Farhi was unwilling to rewrite his storyline to reflect this change, and so *Farwell Great Macedon* was abandoned.

Writer Malcolm Hulke first submitted the storyline for *Britain 408AD* in September 1963 and was briefly considered for the sixth slot – Serial F - of Season One. The story was intended as a 6-part adventure featuring the First Doctor, Susan, Ian and Barbara. The central idea of the story involved the departure of the Romans from Britain around the start of the 5th century. The story was set to be directed by Christopher Barry, before it was abandoned. The Aztecs would eventually replace the story. After the departure of story editor David Whitaker, Hulke resubmitted the idea this time featuring the First Doctor, Ian, Barbara and Vicki. Dennis Spooner rejected the story on April 2, 1965.

By late February 1964, story editor David Whitaker had decided to write one of the serials for the show's first recording block himself. (Gerald Blake was allocated to direct.) This untitled adventure would be a six-part story set in sixteenth-century Spain after the Armada and featuring the original TARDIS line-up. Not long after, Whitaker began casting about for a replacement for this story - this would eventually be *The Reign of Terror*. But, by mid-April, Whitaker had changed his mind and was considering the story as the first serial of Doctor Who's second production block. (The story was

intended to follow on after broadcast of *The Dalek Invasion of Earth*.) Ultimately this story was not to be and never came to fruition. However, long after he had left the programme, Whitaker submitted a storyline entitled *The New Armada*, likely a revised version of this original story. Gerry Davis who felt the plot was too complex rejected this 'revised' version on January 17, 1966. Nonetheless, Davis invited Whitaker to submit further ideas to the series, which eventually lead him to writing *The Power of The Daleks*, the debut adventure for the second Doctor.

The Slide, by Victor Pemberton, is one of the most renowned rejected storylines in the series early history. Originally planned for season two, the storyline featured the original TARDIS team in a story where a sentient form of mud emerges from a fissure and begins to over the minds of the British public. The storyline was rejected in September 1964 by then story editor David Whitaker who felt that the story was a 'stewpot' of earlier Doctor Who sci-fi themes. Interestingly enough, Pemberton had also submitted a version of the storyline to BBC Radio in August that was eventually transmitted on the BBC Light Programme over 7 weeks beginning on February 13, 1966. Pemberton would again adapt *The Slide* for Doctor Who in a version that eventually became *Fury From The Deep*.

Brian Hayles was asked to develop his storyline for his proposed First Doctor, Steven and Vicki story *The Dark Planet* on February 26, 1965. Nothing can be found on what happened to this story, other than it was intended for Season 3, so it can be assumed it was eventually dropped and forgotten about by the production staff.

It seems while serving as producer, John Wiles, developed *The Face Of God* as a story idea intended for the third season. The basis of the story was that while in space, a massive face materializes in front of the TARDIS and claims to be God, but it is eventually revealed to be a hoax.

Robert Holmes is oft regarded by fans of the series as the best writer to have written for the series, and one of the earliest ideas he submitted to the production office was in 1965 for a 4-part story called *The Trap*. The story was to have featured Ian, Barbara and Vicki. The arrival of the TARDIS on a planet causes the reactivation of a nearby spaceship, which releases a gas, which causes the time travellers to amnesiac. They are captured by robots from the ship, which put them through tests of intelligence and agility. They then meet the re-awakened masters of the vessel, who had gone into suspended animation after the ship crashed on the planet. Because some of the original crew were killed in the accident, they need three of the four travellers to assist them in piloting the vessel; the other will be killed. The Doctor and his companions sabotage the ship and make their escape.

Holmes had originally conceived *The Trap* as a non-Doctor Who serial but submitted it to story



Jacqueline Hill and William Russell as Barbara & Ian



Ian, the Doctor, Barbara, & Susan

editor Donald Tosh after being told by Head of Drama Serials Shaun Sutton that the BBC was not otherwise interested. Holmes and Tosh met on April 23, 1965 to discuss the storyline. Holmes submitted his finished scripts but on May 14th, Tosh responded with concerns that the robots were too similar to the Mechanoids from the forthcoming serial, *The Chase*. Tosh also explained that Ian and Barbara would need replacing with new companion Michael Taylor – who would later become Steven. Shortly after this, Holmes ended up working on the drama series *Private Eye* and it appears the story was eventually dropped. Holmes later resubmitted it to the production office in 1968 where it eventually evolved into *The Krotons*.

Brian Hayles was again commissioned on November 16, 1965 to write a storyline featuring the First Doctor, Steven and Dodo called *The Hands of Aten*. The story was abandoned on January 17, 1966 by out-going story editor Donald Tosh who felt that it did not fit the vision espoused by the incoming production team of Innes Lloyd and Gerry Davis.

At the same time as he was commissioned to write a storyline for *The Hands of Aten*, Brian Hayles was also commissioned to write another storyline for his idea *The White Witch*. Once again this story line would feature the First Doctor, Steven and Dodo and intended for Season 3. The story was also abandoned on January 17, 1966 by out-going story editor Donald Tosh who felt that it did not fit the vision espoused by the incoming production team of Innes Lloyd and Gerry Davis.

Hayles soon followed *The White Witch* with another storyline titled *The Nazi's* on March 8, 1966, which featured Steven and Dodo. The story was intended as part of Season 4, but was quickly abandoned when Hayles was engaged to write *The Smugglers*, which was told should have higher priority. *The Nazi's* storyline was formally abandoned on June 15th.

Not much is known about *The Clock*, a story idea intended for the fourth season by David Ellis that was to include companions Steven and Dodo. Story editor Gerry Davis rejected the story on April 4, 1966.

Another idea that was intended for the fourth season was *The Evil Eye* by Geoffrey Orme. Once again this story was to include companions Steven and Dodo. Story editor Gerry Davis rejected the story on April 4, 1966.

The Ocean Liner was another Steven and Dodo storyline that would be eventually rejected. David Ellis submitted the idea, which Gerry Davis rejected on April 4, 1966.

George Kerr submitted a storyline in April 1966 for a story featuring companions Steven and Dodo called *The Hearsay Machine*. The story was intended for the fourth season but was rejected in June.

Following on from completing *The Gunfighters*, Donald Cotton submitted a storyline with First Doctor, Steven and Dodo called *The Herdsmen of Aquarius (a.k.a. The Herdsman of Venus)*, which centered on the revelation that the Loch Ness Monster was a type of cattle bred by Venusian farmers. It was reported that the storyline was rejected by new script editor Gerry Davis for not being in line with his and producer Innes Lloyd more serious vision of Doctor Who. Both men had also complained that Cotton was difficult to contact and it appears that the storyline was rejected on June 15, 1966, although it still did appear on documentation dated August of that year.

Steven and Dodo must have been seen as a popular team as George Kerr submitted another storyline featuring them entitled *The Man From The Met*. This idea was submitted in April 1966 but apparently rejected in June.

After his storyline for *The Ocean Liner* was rejected, David Ellis teamed up with Malcolm Hulke and submitted *The People Who Couldn't Remember* in April 1966. This story line likely featured the team of Ben and Polly, eventually reaching the script stage. However, Gerry Davis rejected it on June 15th.

In part two of our look at the stories that never were, we examine the era of the Second Doctor.

Article by Bob Furnell

The Greatest Doctor Who Writer of All Time

PART TWO

In the last issue: The writer was revealed to be a Robert Holmes fan, the Daleks appeared en masse, Pip and Jane got slaughtered, and Dennis Spooner and Christopher Bidmead left with perfect scores on their card. Now - the favourites come into scrutiny, with Holmes, Whitaker, Hulke and Dicks all coming under the microscope. And the eye of indecision casts its sway towards the creators of K-9, WOTAN and the Ice Warriors. And amongst all that, we have the top five writers of Doctor Who revealed! Interested?

To be a contender for the accolade of "Greatest Doctor Who writer ever" was very simple, you had to have written three or more stories. That meant that Douglas Adams and Ian Briggs, as good as they were, could not qualify. The writers who did qualify have all their stories evaluated. Once this is achieved, their successful stories ("the hits") are divided by their unsuccessful stories ("the misses") to give us some recognition of who were more successful than others. Please note that everything I say in this article should not be taken as fact, but is merely a statement of my opinion, and therefore open to debate. I am merely fanning the flames of argument. Ready for the run-in? Then it is time to start with a man who gave us Tloxl, the Abbot and Tegana. It can only be John Lucarotti!

JOHN LUCAROTTI

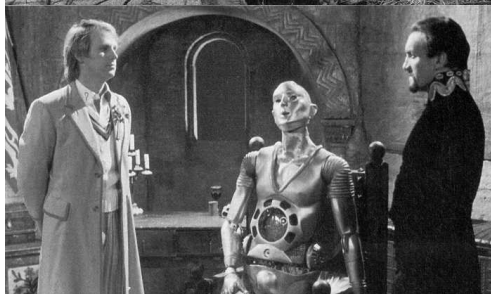
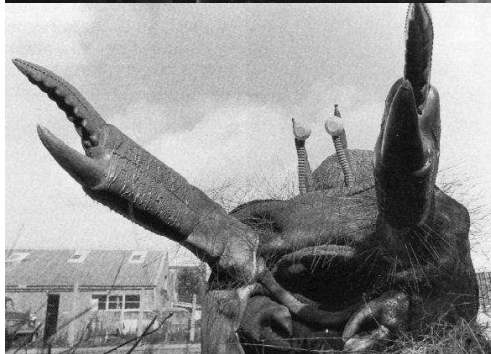
Involved: 1963-65

Best known for: his gritty realistic historicals

Wrote: "Marco Polo", "The Aztecs", "The Massacre"

Quote: "Let there be no more talk against us that the Gods are against us"

You can not change history. Not one line. Although people disagree with John, stating that merely by being in the context of history the Doctor and his companions are changing history. There is a word for people like that, and that word is pedantic. Lucarotti mixes wit with



grit, and his scripts are amongst the best in the series. Take the gritty drama of "The Massacre" for example, and compare to one of the historical comedies like "The Gunfighters". As great as "Gunfighters" is, it is blown away by the sheer depth of what Lucarotti serves up. The Doctor goes out of his way to NOT change the course of history, even if that allows a young girl to die (the Dodo excuse never really washes with me)

and his companions reactions to this - whether it be Steven's decision to leave the TARDIS, or Barbara's desire to stop the human sacrifices - appeal to the viewer because that is exactly what the viewer would have done in the circumstances. Powerful stuff. "Marco Polo" is lost, and as a result is a classic that no one can say a bad word against (so says fandom). The tele-snaps look interesting, and the plotting seems enjoyable enough in the Target novelisation. That opinion may change when I hear the audio, but I'll assume for now it will not.

The hits: "Marco Polo", "Aztecs", "Massacre"

Ratio: 3:0

Another with 100% record. Yet as I explained for Chris Boucher, it may not be his efforts that count against him in the end, but the sheer lack of depth to his library of Who writings. It doesn't take anything away from the fact that "Aztecs" in particular is one of the all time classics of Doctor Who.

TERENCE DUDLEY

Involved: 1981-82

Best known for: his spin-off show with K9, allowing the 5th Doctor to survive in space.

Wrote: "Four to Doomsday", "Black Orchid", "The Kings Demons"

Quote: "You may keep the pencil"

It is the mark of a man that none of his stories are regarded as the classics, and neither are they the conkers of their season. They are just there, being inoffensive in their own way. "Doomsday" is dull, "Black Orchid" allows Pete Davison to play some cricket, and "Demons" is just....."Demons". There is little else you can say about the man.

The hits: "Black Orchid"

The misses: "Four to Doomsday, The Kings Demons"

Not the worst and certainly no where near exceptionally. Terence Dudley was just...there. And little more can be said about it.

IAN STUART BLACK

Involved: 1964-67

Best known for: "Doctor Who is required. Bring him here"

Wrote: "The Savages, The War Machines, The Macra Terror"

Quote: "All progress is based on exploitation"

There is a sort of a noble naivety about Ian's work on Doctor Who which gives his scripts a sort of ironic classic status. He has characters refer to our hero as Doctor Who, and people monitoring the TARDIS's travels in space (I gather the ratings for Billy were good then!). I like "The War Machines", the idea of a computer deciding the world must be taken over by noon next Wednesday strikes me as amusing, and the war machines themselves are charming, though they seem to prefer firing fire extinguishers and knocking down boxes, rather than doing useful things like taking over the world or starting wars. It is nice to see Doctor Who taking part in an Earth where even nondescript characters like the tramp get their picture in the papers when they die! "The Savages" has a rather creepy idea running through it, that of life-force exploitation and it reminds me of that old Star Trek episode about the elders with supreme power ("The Menagerie" I believe it was called) which scared me when I was younger. What can I say? I scared easily. And anyone with enough nerve to script the line "Have fun while you can before they crawl all over you!" has to be respected, in my book.

The hits: "The War Machines, The Macra Terror"

The misses: "The Savages"

Ratio 2:1

So like the majority of those who scripted three stories, Ian has produced one duff story and two better ones. Not exactly the work of the greatest ever. Doctor Who may be required, but in better scripts than these...

PETER GRIMWADE

Involved: 1982-84

Best known for: "Time-Flight"

Wrote: Time-Flight, Mawdryn Undead, The Planet of Fire"

Quote: "He's been.....atomised"

For one who worked so long on Doctor Who, you'd think Grimwade would realise that you could not film a Concorde crashing into a pre-historic setting on a BBC budget! And once you have written one of the stories widely accepted as being among the worst of all time, there is no coming back from that, even if your next two are miles better. Mawdryn and Fire are better, much better, and the character of Turlough is expertly handled. In his two stories Grimwade fits in The Guardians, Turlough's entrance, Turlough's exit, the Master, Kameleon, the Brigadier, time paradoxes, Lanzarote and Peri's introduction - overloading both scripts as if to apologise for the awfulness of his first attempt.



I was going to give Peter a decent review overall, then I just watched "Planet of Fire"...and was really disappointed. I remembered it being brilliant, and it was a massive let down. The scripting was good, but overdrawn and just lacked something. If this turned out so badly despite my memory, how can I assume my memories of "Mawdryn" being one of the classics of Davison's era are accurate? For the benefit of the doubt, and because it has Nick Courtney in it, I'll give it my memories of "Mawdryn" the benefit of the doubt.

The hits: "Mawdryn Undead, Planet of Fire" (it is still enjoyable, even if disappointing)

The misses: "TimeFlight"

Ratio 2:1

TimeFlight can be nothing but a major negative against Grimwade. It is a shame because once you get past the convoluted nature of his other stories, there are some nice ideas.

ROBERT SLOMAN & BARRY LETTS

Involved: 1971-74

Best known for: "The Daemons"

Wrote: "The Daemons, The Time Monster, The Green Death, The Planet of The Spiders"

Quote: "Chap with wings there...five rounds

rapid"

Barry Letts was the antithesis of Doctor Who DIY. He wrote, directed, produced, and even acted during the Jon Pertwee years. But was he any good? His scripts contained good ideas, rotten characterisation, and, in general, enough fun parts to keep people happy, "Time Monster" aside. It is perhaps unfortunate he has on his CV a story widely considered as one of the worst of all time! However "The Green Death" is iconic, forever remembered as the one with the maggots! A death coloured green....a green death. I can not help but notice how complicated the scripting gets for "Green Death", with the villains changing from Hinks and Elgin to Fell to Mr James, although I accept that was the fault of some actors who couldn't help contracting appendicitis during filming! Also, Hinks as security chief is one of the best characters in it and he doesn't live past the episode 3 cliffhanger! A wasted opportunity! Most of the miners are stereotypical boyos, with wonderful names like Dai Evans, and Pertwee dressed in drag to escape detection is hilarious. Plus, Mick Yates gets written out, and that can only be a good thing....except they bring him back in "Planet of the Spiders". Speaking of "Spiders", do you think episode 2 was written on any more than two sheets of A4? I mean, how much paper does it cost to describe a twenty minute vehicle chase? The spiders look unrealistic, and the script is too convoluted to make much sense. The idea of the Doctor meeting his teacher, and realising he must die to prevent the spiders winning, is inspired. And Pertwee's final scene is brilliant, making up for all the dross ("Time Monster", "Mutants") we have had to put up for in the last five years.

The hits: "Daemons, Green Death"

The misses: "Time Monster, Planet of the Spiders"

Ratio 2:2

A 2-2 draw maybe enjoyable in the terms of sport, but it is not strongly advised for the potential of being greatest writer in Doctor Who. My final piece of advise: Barry should have stuck to producing.

MALCOLM HULKE

Involved: 1966-74

Best known for: Stories with Morals, and the Sea Devils!

Wrote: "The Faceless Ones, The War Games, The Silurians, The Ambassadors of Death, Colony in Space, The Sea Devils, Frontier In Space, The Invasion of the Dinosaurs"

Quote: "It seems to be a rather interesting extraterrestrial life form"

"Stories with morals" would be the most appropriate description of Malcolm Hulke's time on the show. Most of Hulke's scripts either belittled out "look after your environment" or "be nice to all races". Sure there were dinosaurs, faceless ones and sea devils, but there were only there to provide the moral. It could thus be argued that Hulke used television, and Doctor Who in particular, as a vehicle to force his



views on people. Possibly, but then if this is true, one other question remains: is this acceptable if the scripts themselves are great? "The Faceless Ones" is suitably creepy, and if you can look beyond the Basil-Brush dinosaurs in "Invasion", you will find a well worked 'establishment verses green' tale, although it would be preferable if it did not turn out that everyone was a traitor! "The Silurians" and "The Sea Devils" are basically the same tale with different monsters, but I have always preferred "The Sea Devils" although it matters not seeing as both are classics!

The hits: "Faceless Ones, War Games, Silurians, Ambassadors of Death, Sea Devils"

The misses: "Colony in Space, Frontier In Space, Invasion of the Dinosaurs"

Ratio: 5-3

Hulke scores off with 5 sizeable hits, dragged down by 3 sizeable misses. Where will it all add up in the final tally?

BRIAN HAYLES

Involved: 1965-74

Best known for: The Ice Warriors

Wrote: "The Celestial Toymaker, The Smugglers, The Ice Warriors, The Seeds of Death (original scripts), The Curse of Peladon, The Monster of Peladon"

Quote: "I love to play games, but there is no one to play against"

I said once that everything depends on the monsters, and in the Ice Warriors Brian Hayles created a race strong enough to be categorised in that rare group with the Cybermen and the Daleks as the greatest race of aliens to ever appear in the show. The fact that Hayle's scripts were of a hit and miss category do not lessen that achievement. The fact that his greatest story was "The Seeds of Death", and that four of those six episodes were rewritten extensively by Terrence Dicks does slightly. The Toymaker was another interesting conception, but it did not really work out in onscreen translation. "Smugglers" was a nice tale, one of the last few attempts by the production team to do a "pure" historical, and yet it just doesn't work. Maybe it looked so much better on screen, but as it is we are left with the audio, and the dialogue doesn't inspire grand allusions to greatness. The idea that the Doctor is morally obliged to help out people is a nice touch expressed through the story though. In his later days, "Curse of Peladon" was one of the more enjoyable (and surprising!) stories of Jon Pertwee's era, whilst "Monster of Peladon" was one of the worst. A clear case of going once too often to the same well.

The hits: "Ice Warriors, Seeds of Death, Curse of Peladon"

The misses: "Celestial Toymaker, Smugglers, Monster of Peladon"

Ratio: 2:3

Much in the way "The Brain of Morbius" is no longer considered a Terrence Dicks story due to Robert Holmes rewriting it, so "Seeds of Death" should count as a Brian Hayles classic, since it was so substantially rewritten by Terrence Dicks. Which leaves Hayles with the 2-3 ratio, which is just not good enough.

TERRANCE DICKS

Involved: 1969-83

Best known for: The Target novelisations, The Time Lords

Wrote: "The Seeds of Death (reworked scripts), The War Games, Robot, The Brain of Morbius (original scripts), Horror of Fang Rock, State of Decay, The Five Doctors"

Quote: "If the sum of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the square on the other two sides, why is a mouse when it spins?"

It was clear Terrence Dicks loved Doctor Who, but did Doctor Who love Terry Dicks? Dicks recounts, "I wrote an ambush scene with two men, and in broadcast it turned into an army complete with helicopters. I asked the director about it and his reply was "you do your bit in telling the story, and I'll do my bit!" What we can thank Terence for is his long run as script editor. He was the longest running script editor Doctor Who ever had. And yet he could not save the "Time Monster"...sorry, no one could have saved the "Time Monster". What really works in Terry's favour is that he knew how to structure a tight four-parter properly. Take "State of

Decay" for example. Within it we are surprised to learn that the Lords are vampires, the Tower is in fact a spaceship, the Vampires are old foes of the Time Lords, and the Great Vampire is sleeping in the crypt. Now, in typical Who terms, you would be forgiven for expecting all of these plot devices to be delivered in the last five minute rush that is a typical part 4. Instead we knew of the vampires by midway through episode two, and so skillfully the story becomes not "what is the secret" but "how will the Doctor and friends survive?", making it far more intriguing for the viewer!

The hits: "Seeds of Death, War Games, "Robot", Horror of Fang Rock, State of Decay"

The miss: "Five Doctors"

Terry scores 5-1! Its possible we should all bow to such class, as this result surely seals Terrence Dicks' place in the elite!

JOHNNY BRYNE

Involved: 1981-84

Best known for: Introducing Nyssa to the world.

Wrote: "The Keeper of Traken, Arc of Infinity, Warriors of the Deep"

Quote: "Impulse laser?"

Only an idiot contemplates what weapon is about to be used to kill him. It could also be said that only an idiot relies on bringing back past glories (The Master, The Sea Devils, Omega) and trying to turn them into your own. There isn't even any specific dialogue I can poke fun at, nor any particularly bad characters in his scripts, as the majority are all significantly flawed, from the nonsensical turn of Hedin to the great Myrka! Although the line "you'll get no help from me...Silurian!" does raise a chuckle or two. All in all though, apart from a few good ideas in his stories, the execution is all wrong, and so there "should have been another way"

The hits: none

The misses: "Keeper of Traken, Arc of Infinity, Warriors of the Deep"

Ratio: 0:3

An 100% failure record places Johnny Bryne up there with the likes of Pip and Jane, and David Fischer. You are the weakest link, goodbye.

LOUIS MARKS

Involved: 1965-76

Best known for: having the Daleks added to one of his stories

Wrote: "Planet of Giants, Day of the Daleks, Planet of Evil, Masque of Mandragora"

Quote: "It's only dangerous if I'm wrong. Then it's fatal"

Louis Marks did not write conventional scripts. Tiny regulars, time paradox Daleks, Forbidden planets, and helix energy in Renaissance Italy is not the typical repertoire of Doctor Who. But was it any good? Sadly not. Louis' work just does not have the depth or continued brilliance

needed to sustain a challenge for the top.

The hits: "Day of the Daleks, Masque of Mandragora"

The misses: "Planet of Giants, Planet of Evil"
A lesson to be learned here is do not place the word planet in your script titles. When we have difficulty finding the words to describe a writer, it should be clear that they are not worth it...

ERIC SAWARD

Involved: 1982-85

Best known for: updating the Daleks (and mercenaries!)

Wrote: "The Visitation, Earthshock, Resurrection of the Daleks, Revelations of the Daleks"

Quote: "Oh dear, it's all getting rather silly isn't it?"

Fast action, stop, fast action, stop, fast action, stop : is this the description of your average sport or more akin to the nature of the plots of Eric Saward? There is certainly a lot of action in his stories. Eric shows he can take a blend of the best moments of prior Dalek stories, and incorporate them into heavily convoluted pieces of drama. Certainly, there is never a dull moment in an Eric Saward story! One criticism could be that he was rather derivative when it came to ideas, but since when was a Dalek story anything other than derivative (see, Nation, Terry for details). Plus he killed off Adric, surely endearing himself to all fans ever! Writing the Doctor Who version of Alien, but substituting Alien for Cybermen is genius! A cynic might say that the action only occurs as a substitute for the lack of plot, but Saward succeeds because...because...well because his stories are so damn enjoyable! And that is a lesson Pip and Jane, among others, should have learned.

The hits: "The Visitation, Earthshock, Resurrection of the Daleks, Revelation of the Daleks"

Ratio: 4:0

Is that the continuity police I hear knocking at the door? I make no excuses for the fact that I like Eric's stories, and if you do not, then you do not have to watch them...

BOB BAKER & DAVE MARTIN

Involved: 1971-80

Best known for: giant prawns, K-9 and Axos

Wrote: "The Claws of Axos, The Mutants, The Three Doctors, The Sontaran Experiment, The Hand of Fear, The Invisible Enemy, Underworld, The Armageddon Factor, Nightmare of Eden"

Quote: "Contact has been made"

Many people do not like Bob and Dave's writing, but I don't mind them that much. Sounds like a fairly controversial way to begin! Sure, "Underworld" was a disgrace, but "Armageddon Factor" and "Claws of Axos" are great, and although they will never claim to be true classics, "The Three Doctors" and "Nightmare of Eden"

are lightweight fun. Some of their ideas have heavy technobabble-aced solutions - references to "extraterrestrial pathological endomorphisms" and "astro-rectifiers", far from making the viewer think "how clever!" instead leave everyone puzzled. In fact, "Underworld" is the single most confusing story in Doctor Who history. I still do not understand it, and it doesn't help matters by being incredibly dull. There is some good model work in it though. The direction for several of the pair's stories was below par, though it is doubtful we can blame them for that! Characters can also be a tad clichéd, and seem to spout endless catchphrases, where it be "Hail Eldrad!", "Contact has been made", "the quest is the quest" or "the catchphrase is the catchphrase!" (sorry, made that last one up). Their scripts also seem to rely too heavily on CSO, and the effects are often negligible....you can write against CSO, you know.

So with all these faults, is there anything to like about Bob and Dave? Sure there is. They're not Pip and Jane for one, and not being those two scores high brownie points for all. Also, "Claws of Axos" is one of the more accomplished debuts of any writers. It is also creepy as well as I remember being terrified by the tentacle-creatures. Plus the Master is good in it. I have let "The Mutants" reputation precede it, and all I know is that Salman Rushdie misinterpreted it. "3 Doctors" has The Mighty Trout in it, and therefore we Doctor Who fans can not count it as anything less than a classic! (to all Tom Baker fans out there, that is called being sardonic).

"Armageddon Factor". Never before have I felt a story has had such an undeserved reputation. The Doctor saves two planets, K-9 and the Universe from the Black Guardian, restores the proper balance of everything, plays agony aunt to a teenage couple, fixes megalomania in the Marshall, rescues a drifting Time Lord and eats some jelly babies all in the space of six episodes. It is possibly Tom Baker's Doctor's most shining moment in his time. Plus the scripting is witty, and the laden doom laden feeling results in a brooding, sombre 6-parter, in possibly the most melancholy of all Doctor Who stories. And may I repeat myself - he saves two planets in the nick of time! What more do you want from your hero?

The hits: "The Claws of Axos, The Three Doctors, Sontaran Experiment, Armageddon Factor, Nightmare of Eden"

The misses: "Mutants, Hand of Fear, Invisible Enemy, Underworld"

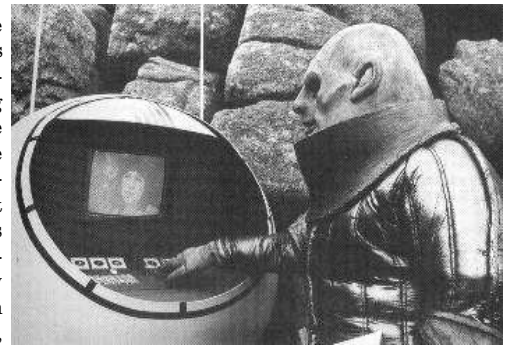
Ratio: 5:4

And no, "Underworld" does not count as two! Bob and Dave are underrated, not quite anywhere near the best, but nowhere near the worst....compared to the Bakers, Bob and Dave are the Robert Holmes of double-acts! This is a pairing for whom the reputation is worse than it should be.

DAVID WHITAKER

Involved: 1963-70

Best known for: "Power of the Daleks"



Wrote: "Inside the Spaceship, The Rescue, The Crusade, The Power of the Daleks, The Evil of the Daleks, The Enemy of the World, The Wheel in Space, The Ambassadors of Death"

Quotes: "So what, you try, you fail, the moon does not fall out of the sky"

He redefined the Daleks, wrote for the Cybermen, made a respectable James Bond story on the BBC budget, and wrote "The Crusade", so why is David Whitaker not thought of as the greatest Doctor Who writer of all time? He wrote "The Crusade" in iambic pentameter, and although "The Rescue" is not the best example of William Hartnell's Doctor, it is a brave attempt to be different. And it introduces Vicki, which is all it needs to do. The Daleks are better cared for inside "Power" and "Evil" than by most other script writers, and "Enemy of the World" is one of Troughton's best stories ever, the character of Salamander being suitably evil and juxtaposed against the whimsically good-natured Doctor. All in all, brilliant, simply brilliant.

The hits: "Inside the Spaceship, Crusade, Power of the Daleks, Evil of the Daleks, Enemy of the World, Wheel in Space, Ambassadors of Death"

The misses: "The Rescue"

Ratio: 7:1

A 7-1 victory is impressive in any form. Even

Whitaker's weakest story, "Rescue" is enjoyable in parts. As a strong challenger as anyone for the next writer I am to mention as anyone....

ROBERT HOLMES

Involved: 1968-86

Best known for: The Autons, Sontarans, the Master, "The Talons of Weng-Chiang", "The Caves of Androzani", etc.

Wrote: "The Krotons, The Space Pirates, The Spearhead from Space, Terror of the Autons, Carnival of Monsters, The Time Warrior, The Ark in Space, Pyramids of Mars, The Brain of Morbius (reworked scripts), The Deadly Assassin, The Talons of Weng-Chiang, The Sun-Makers, The Ribos Operation, The Power of Kroll, The Caves of Androzani, The Two Doctors, The Trial of a Time Lord episodes 1-4, 13"

Quotes: "If heroes don't exist, it is necessary to invent them - good for public morale"

Can I just say now that I realise if I come up with any solution other than RH being the greatest writer of all time then I should expect the lynch mob around my place in two weeks. The roll of achievements that slipped off the pen of Mr Holmes can not be underestimated: the Autons, the Master, Sontarans, Sutekh, Solon, Gallifrey, Ribos, Kroll, Sharez Jek, Morgus, Stotz, Ravolox and many more all invented single-handedly. The sheer volume of classics that he inked are more than any one man has any right to claim - "Spearhead", "Carnival", "Ark", "Pyramids", "Talons" and "Caves" to name but a few. Even his less successful stories like "Terror of the Autons", "SunMakers" and "Kroll" could make claims to

be the best stories in their respective seasons, and whilst derided as his worst story ever, "The Two Doctors" give us a last chance to see Pat Troughton Doctorin' about, and it is also easily one of the best Colin Baker Doctor Who stories. So in essence we are talking about a guy whose worst ("Two Doctors") could easily be someone else's best efforts - a tale Pip and Jane would be proud to have on their CV at any mention. But Pip and Jane are not worthy to lick the ink off the fingers of this man when it comes to Doctor Who. He was the be all and end all, and it is little wonder so many fans consider so many of his stories as being true "greatest story ever" contenders.

The hits: "Spearhead from Space, Terror of the Autons, Carnival of Monsters, Ark in Space, Pyramids of Mars, Brain of Morbius, Deadly Assassin, Talons of Weng-Chiang, SunMakers, Ribos Operation, Power of Kroll, Caves of Androzani"

The misses: "The Krotons, The Space Pirates, The Time Warrior, The Two Doctors, Trial of a Time Lord"

Ratio: 12:5

This man wrote twelve stories that could be argued as classics! Twelve! That's more than most others even wrote for the series! What more can you say about this man's greatness?

To lower the number of writers scrapping for this accolade, we now eliminate all writers with an 100% failure rating. So say goodbye to Pip and Jane Baker, David Fischer, and Johnny Byrne, may they not be missed. We should now also eliminate those writers whose aggregate

results left more failures than successes. That means we also say goodbye to Terry Nation (sadly) and Bryan Hayles (not so sadly). And in an attempt to further reduce the remainder we shall now remove all writers with

less than four stories to their name. That kicks out Bidmead, Haisman and Lincoln, Spooner, Boucher, Lucarotti, Black and Grimwade. A bit sad, but three stories only was pushing it a bit. I will also remove the double acts of Sloman and Letts, and Louis Marks because their aggregate score (2-2) was not respectable, and also because they are no where near the greatest. As fun as he is, I think it is safe to leave out Eric Saward now (he can't make any strong run to be the greatest), and the Pedler-Davis duo (the curse of "Revenge" strikes again!). This leaves us with a top five, and in a second I will use my trusty calculator to produce the definitive list on who is the best of all time. My tip is it will probably come out in favour of Holmes. So...drum roll please...



Article by Michael Collins

THE FIVE GREATEST WRITERS OF DOCTOR WHO

FIVE

**BOB BAKER
& DAVE MARTIN**
(55% success rate)

These two shocked many by securing the status needed to get to this stage- that being having more than four great stories. It is hard to imagine the writers of "Underworld" being in such a state, though it is easy picturing the writers of "Armageddon Factor", "Claws of Axos" and "Nightmare of Eden" being in such distinguished company. Case in point, I still believe Bob and Dave are terribly underrated, and that they fully deserve their place here in the top echelon.

FOUR

MALCOLM HULKE
(63% success rate)

It appears here that it is alright to use your great idea more than once if you can make it seem original enough. That is probably why the moral man is rated so highly by the mathematics. "The Sea Devils" and "The Silurians" work because, despite being the same basic story, they have enough verve and are entertaining enough to be taken on their own. Plus he worked on "The War Games"....what more did we need?

THREE

ROBERT HOLMES
(73% success rate)

Only 3rd? I guess that only goes to prove my mathematics are rubbish, as the calculator proves me wrong. Apparently 12 out of 17 is a lower percentage grade than the other two. Well I promised a shock, and we have one. So who will be crowned best of all time?

TWO

TERRANCE DICKS
(83% success rate)

Uncle Terry gets some respect at last. This of course ruins any suspense now as to who is number one, it is none other than...

ONE

DAVID WHITAKER
(88% success rate)

And the shock result I could have never have predicted at the start of writing this thing could not have fallen to a more deserving candidate. David Whitaker is the greatest Doctor Who writer of all time, say the results, a result more fascinating by the fact he never wrote for the show beyond 1970!

So there you have it. Robert Holmes lead the one horse race all the way, and in the end, finished 3rd behind the UNIT daddy Terrence Dicks, and maverick writer David Whitaker. It just goes to show you the range and skills of so many writers that have contributed to Doctor Who over the years. I hope this was an enjoyable read for all who see it, and if you learn one thing from it - respect Bob and Dave!

the green death



On the face of it, "The Green Death" is a pretty basic story: evil chemical company run by a malign supercomputer making profits selling clean fuel while secretly pumping out toxic waste that makes giant monsters.

pantomime-level comedy. It's also overshadowed in Doctor Who fan mythology by the fact that it features the departure of Jo Grant (Katy Manning), and signals the further unravelling of the Pertwee-era "UNIT family". But one of the great things about this DVD release is that it gives us a chance to have a look beyond these to elements of the story that have been forgotten over the years.

Yes, the story shows its age, and creaks slowly and lumberingly to the final scene. And yes, as the disc plays on you get to clock the appearance of the weasel-jaws, the maggots in Swarfega, the customary CSO flicker, the exploding condoms and the awful fly/Bessie sequence. And yes, Jon Pertwee does his comedy voice thing

and plays a milkman and a charwoman, but there are some hidden goodies. There are elements in the story and production that are genuinely surprising. For instance, there's a throwaway line from one of the Welsh miners to the Wholeweal protesters that shifts the dynamic between the two groups up a notch from simple stereotype. As Professor Jones lambasts the petro-chemical industry, Dai Evans shouts: "It's alright for you: you can afford to live the way you want. We need the jobs." Rarely has Doctor Who before or since placed any of its anti-establishment characters in such an uncompromisingly realistic context.

The character of BOSS, too, has some unexpected twists. No evilly-hissing WOTAN this - BOSS hums to itself! John Dearth voices BOSS as if the computer is only really half paying attention to what's going on around it and is half off on some other, higher plane. His relationship with the increasingly irritated Stevens is really quite funny. It's a bizarrely dotty machine that could have stumbled from the pen of Douglas Adams. There are some nicely-scripted points made by Stewart Bevan's Clifford Jones about alternative energy - points that are still relevant to script writers for dramas like "Eleventh Hour". Stewart Bevan and Katy Manning clearly made the most of their off-

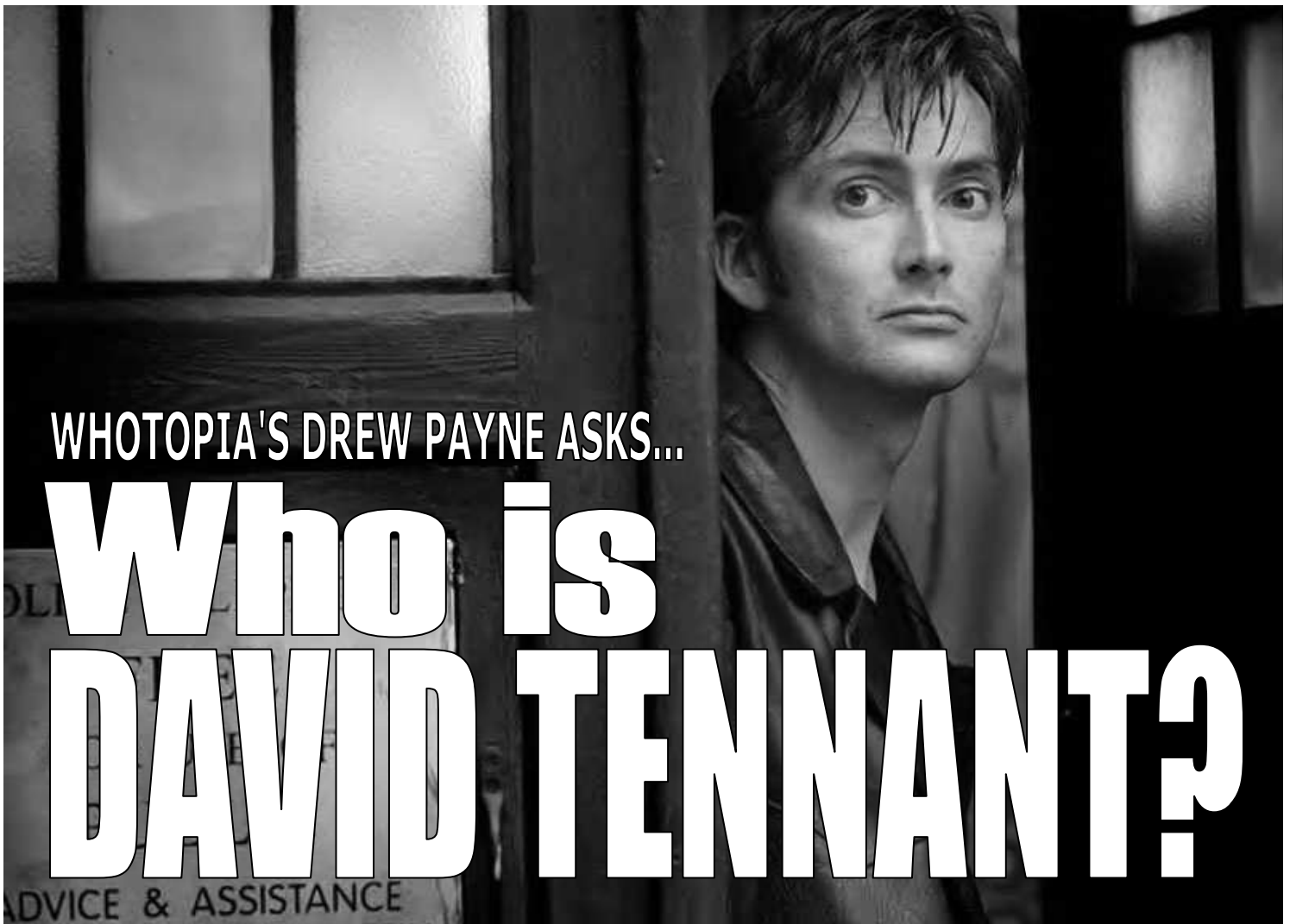
screen relationship in order to bring a genuine air of friendship to their characters' relationship. The UNIT crew, too - Nicholas Courtney, John Levene and Richard Franklin - are in good form. Jon Pertwee gets some good moments - lurching from Metebelis 3 to the phone in his lab, for example. And for the record, those maggots are really rather good! (Pity about the fly and the model Bessie, though). It's worth teasing these points out from everything we supposedly know about "The Green Death", because behind all the bad CSO and the rather-too-obvious green message are some unexpectedly classic Doctor Who moments.

So what DVD extras can you put on a disc that stars things that crawl out of rotten apples? There's the indulgently funny documentary on Llanfairfach which takes deserved, post-Little Britain swipes at the stereotyping of the Welsh. Its presenter, "Man Alive"'s Terry Scanlon, seems to have escaped from "The League of Gentlemen"... The documentary with Colin Mapson on making the maggot was interesting enough, but it does make you feel a bit nerdy watching it. The photo gallery, as usual, doesn't really include anything amazing. The interviews with Robert Sloman and Stewart Bevan were interesting, but watching them - and listening to the commentary with Katy Manning, Barry Letts and Terrance Dicks - really made you want to hear Jon Pertwee. It's funny, really - during the whole of "The Green Death", the Doctor rushes around a lot, but doesn't really have much to do. Oh I know, he flashes his crystal at Stevens and defeats BOSS, paddles through green slime and throws mushroom powder at the maggots, but that could have all been done by someone else. I'm sure Nancy could have figured out what was wrong with Pr. Jones, and then they could have dealt with the maggots. All it would have taken after that would be a UNIT airstrike on Global Chemicals to finish the story off. The Doctor might as well have stayed on Metebelis 3. It's ironic, therefore, that Jon Pertwee's absence on this DVD seems so acute. A commentary from him, you feel, would round off the disc in a way the current extras just don't manage. Despite that, it's nice to see this story available at last. "The Green Death" will always be assured of its place in the Doctor Who Hall of Fame, but perhaps the DVD release will make people appreciate it for reasons other than the obvious. **6/10**

Reviewed by John Gordon

Those of you offended by exploding condoms and cross-dressing Timelords, look away now! Yes, it's Doctor Who's first visit to Wales being Wales (and not the Himalayas or the Death Zone) until the TARDIS lands in nineteenth century Cardiff, thirty three years and six Doctors later. In any review of "The Green Death" you can always be certain of hearing about three things: the maggots, the environmental slant to the story, and Jo Grant's departure. Behind these, however, lies an unusual story that manages to mix low comedy with high drama, insightful socio-economic realism with grindingly patronising stereotyping, and thought-provokingly pre-scient cultural commentary with, er... wobbly CSO.

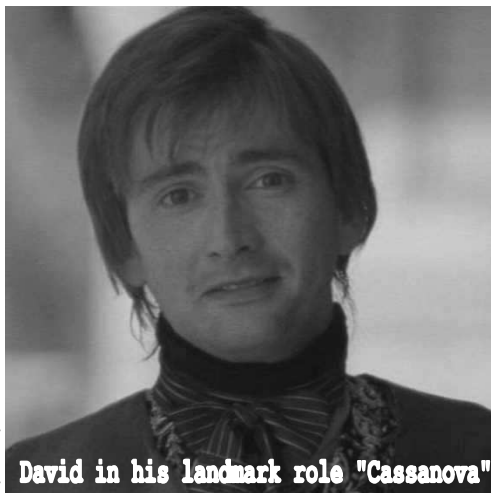
On the face of it, "The Green Death" is a pretty basic story: evil chemical company run by a malign supercomputer making profits selling clean fuel while secretly pumping out toxic waste that makes giant monsters. This basic story is enhanced with a set of green credentials earned by a raggedy bunch of hippie environmentalist underdogs taking on the technogreed of big business, and winning. It's a story marred slightly by its patronising, early-1970s stereotyping of the Welsh and of the alternative movement, and by its descent at times into



Who may seem like a new rising star, who's only just burst upon the acting scene but, like all overnight-sensations before, David Tennant has been around for quite some time. But where has he been and who is this David Tennant?

He was born David McDonald, 18 April 1971, in Bathgate, an industrial town between Edinburgh and Glasgow. He adopted his stage name "Tennant" because he was inspired by Neil Tennant, the lead singer of the Pet Shop Boys. His father, the Very Revd Sandy McDonald, is a minister, and former Moderator of the General Assembly, of the Church of Scotland. From his father he said he found the "solid support" of religion and spirituality, though he is quick to distance himself from the "preachy tendency" of Christianity. At aged three he decided he wanted to be an actor, like "the people on telly telling these wonderful stories". This decision stayed with him and grew as he did, supported by his parents.

At seventeen he joined the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow and graduated aged 20 with a BA in Dramatic Studies. Even for British drama schools this was young. His professional debut, after graduating, was



David in his landmark role "Cassanova"

"A role at the Royal National Theatre (In What the Butler Saw, alongside Richard Wilson) lead to a season with the Royal Shakespeare Company (in 1996) playing roles in both Shakespearian plays and modern productions..."

with the 7:84 Theatre Company, playing Giri the Hitman in their touring production of *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*. 7:84 is a Scottish theatre company, formed by John McGrath in the 1970s, which tours two or three shows a year around the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, performing one night at each town, or occasionally longer in the larger towns. Though a widely respected theatre company, 7:84 is not the most high profile and it wasn't until his first television role that Tennant first began to gain notice.

Takin' Over the Asylum, the 1994 BBC award winning drama, was about Eddie McKenna (Ken Stott) a salesman who starts to run a hospital radio station in a Mental Hospital. Tennant played Campbell Bain a manic-depressive who, through his friendship with Eddie begins to take control his illness. He has described this as his life-changing role. "They needed someone who could believably act 19 and bonkers," he said of the role and he was right. A cast list that also boasted Angus Macfadyen, Ruth McCabe and Elizabeth Spriggs, it was Tennant's performance that left a lasting impression.

"After *Takin' Over The Asylum*, I didn't want to hang around waiting for a part in *EastEnders* [A leading British Soap]. My first London agent



David Tennant in "The Mrs. Bradley Murders"



Top: *Takin' Over The Asylum*
 Middle: *Randall & Hopkirk (Deceased)*
 Bottom: *The Quatermass Experiment*

told me that the way to build a long career was in the theatre," Tennant said. Thus he moved to London, unarguably the home of British theatre. The move certainly proved fruitful. A role at the Royal National Theatre (in *What the Butler Saw*, alongside Richard Wilson) led to a season with the Royal Shakespeare Company (in 1996) playing roles in both Shakespearian plays and modern productions, such as *The Herbal Bed*. He followed this with appearances in the Westend. 1997 saw him in Peter Hall's production of *Hurly Burly*. In 1998 he played one of the leads, in the double bill of, *Black Comedy* and *The Real Inspector Hound*. A return to the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2000 saw Tennant nominated for 2000 Ian Charleson Award (Best classical actor under 30) for RSC's *Comedy of Errors*. In 2002 he was nominated for 2003 Olivier Award as Best Actor for *Lobby Hero*, at the Donmar Warehouse. Though again he didn't win, *Lobby Hero* was still a win for Tennant. He played the lead, Jeff, for which he received rave reviews, praise and a lot of attention. 2005 did see him win the Critics' Award for Theatre in Scotland, Best Male Performance, for his performance as Jimmy Porter in *Look Back In Anger*.

His theatre work didn't go unnoticed and out of it has grown a respectable body of film and television work. His first film role was a small part in *Jude* (1996), alongside Christopher Eccleston and Kate Winslet. This would be followed by the lead role in *L.A. Without a Map* (1998). 2003 saw him as member of the ensemble cast of Stephen Fry's *Bright Young Things*. He also played Barty Crouch Junior, the memorable villain, in 2005's *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*.

But it has been on television that Tennant has made his mark with the public. 1994's *Takin' Over the Asylum* got him noticed and since then he has been getting himself noticed in a sur-

prising variety of roles. He has been in the government in *The Deputy* (2004), Mr. Gibson in the BBC period drama *He Knew He Was Right* (2004), the single-minded D.I. Peter Carlisle in *Blackpool* (2004) and as Doctor Gordon Briscoe in the live broadcast of 2005 version of *The Quatermass Experiment*. But it was his role as Giacomo Casanova, in the BBC's bawdy version of *Casanova*, written by Russell T. Davies, which caught people's attention. His portrayal of Casanova was not as the arch seducer but as a likeable rogue who really loved, liked and listened to women (the real secret of his success). Tennant's charm, along with Davies very modern scripts, helped to make *Casanova* the success it was. "I worked out every single day for five weeks. And then I didn't get to take my shirt off until week ten of filming, by which time it had all gone to pot," Tennant commented on his role. His last role of 2005, before his first full outing as Doctor Who, was yet again a very different role. Brendan Block, in *Secret Smile*, was the psychopathic ex-boyfriend out for revenge, and yet again a departure from his previous roles.

While at school, Tennant wrote an essay on how his greatest desire was to play Doctor Who on TV, a wish that was to come true much later. Though being cast as the Tenth Doctor was not his first brush with Doctor Who. His voice can be heard on several Big Finish audios, including the Doctor Who spin-off *Unit* and the strange but excellent *The Adventures of Luther Arkwright*. He also had a small role in the BBC animated webcast *Scream of the Shalka*, written by Paul Cornell. He was not in the original cast but was working in an neighbouring studio, heard the *Scream of the Shalka* was being recorded he managed to convince the director to give him a small role. He was originally under consideration for the Ninth Doctor, until Christopher Eccleston was cast. Now playing the Tenth Doctor, Tennant makes a trio of Doctor Who fans at the head of the new series – the others being Russell T Davies and Phil Collinson (Producer).

"I still find it impossible to believe that anyone in the arts votes Conservative," Tennant recently said. He has not been shy talking about his leftwing politics, though certainly no fire-brand socialist. In reverse, he is very reluctant to speak about his personal life; "I always disappoint on the personal questions," he said. An ex-girlfriend is the actress Anne-Marie Duff, but he has remained quiet on who his current partner is. Quite the opposite of some actors who have made a bigger career out of their love lives than they ever have out of their acting.

Already, even before Tennant has graced our screens in a full season as the Doctor, questions have been raised about him becoming typecast by Doctor Who. Just a quick glance back over his career, and the sheer diversity of roles and characters he has played, proves this is no danger for David Tennant.

Article by Drew Payne

THE CHRISTMAS INVASION



UK REVIEW - WILL HADCROFT

Like all the stories from the pen of Russell T Davies so far (with the possible exception of *The Parting of the Ways*), David Tennant's debut adventure, and the series' very first official Christmas special is a mixture of the sublime and the awful. There are big concepts, witty lines and memorable moments, but there are also cheap looking set pieces, embarrassing throw-away gags and too-easy-by-far resolutions. It's the sort of hurried mishmash Andrew Cartmel would have been proud of.

The Christmas Invasion opens with the TARDIS popping into the real world above Rose's council estate and literally bouncing off the buildings and crashing on to the street. It's a great effect and one cannot help but wind it back and watch it again. The newly regenerated Doctor tumbles out, wide eyed and Tom Bakeresque. But the moment is ruined

when Jackie exclaims, "The Doctor? Doctor who?" How many police box travelling Doctors does she know? It is clear that Rose is claiming the newcomer is the Doctor both Jackie and Mickey have met before. The gag doesn't work as well as Rose's, "Don't you ever get tired of being called Doctor?" retort in Stephen Moffatt's excellent *The Doctor Dances*. Here it hits the floor with all the subtlety of a loud thud.

Then it's into Murray Gold's rather lovely arrangement of the theme music, with its perfect blend of Delia Derbyshire inspired sounds and brand new orchestrations (the best rearrangement since the Pertwee/Baker version?), synchronised with that stunning reimagining of Bernard Lodge's slit-scan time vortex title sequence; together they slap a smile on the face and fill one with wonder and anticipation.

The Doctor is out of action and recover-

ing from the regeneration process, and so it's over to the soap-styled realism of the everyday, and in particular the strained relationship between Rose, her boyfriend Mickey and her mother Jackie. There are some nice touches, with Penelope Wilton's Harriet Jones making a welcome return as Prime Minister of a new British golden age, and some lovely continuity in the form of scaffolding around a recently restored Big Ben (it having been extensively wrecked by the Slitheen in *Aliens of London*).

Rose and Mickey go Christmas shopping and then all hell breaks loose as aliens dressed as trombone playing Santas open fire. This scene would easily be at home in a Sylvester McCoy serial, with upbeat poppy music accompanying a flurry of sparks and a lot of running around. Indeed, Rose continues to bear more of a resemblance to Sophie Aldred's Ace than any other classic series companion. All she needs

is a rucksack full of Nitro and some out-dated slang and she'd be made.

The Santa scene is guilty of what critic Bonnie Greer claimed of Eccleston's debut adventure last March. It looks cheap and staged. It doesn't look real. A bit of tinsel, a few lights, and virtually every extra carrying a wrapped present – it isn't convincing at all.

Another McCoy era staple is littering stories with fanciful ideas seemingly for the sake of it. Davies equally prefers fantastic visual imagery to proper plotting and character driven drama. This is served up as a homicidal Christmas tree – a tremendous special effect, and one that will stay with people for years, but there only as a bit of superficial nonsense.

The adventure comes to life momentarily as the Doctor bursts from his regenerative sleep, expels the killer fir tree and engages Jackie in a genuinely funny comic routine. However, the moment he returns to a comatose state, so does the viewer's interest.

In fact, I would say the first half of the special, with the exception of one or two moments, is a bit boring. This isn't helped by the amount of incidental music supplied by Murray Gold. The composer does what he does exceptionally well, but is it really necessary to point up absolutely every emotion? Sometimes less is more, and here Gold's music is too generic. It creates an effect opposite to the one desired.

And despite all the attempts to keep us hooked in, one thing becomes sparkingly clear: *Doctor Who* without the Doctor is rather dull.

The story only really becomes absorbing when the Sycorax reveal themselves and people are ready to jump from the roofs of London's buildings (and by implication roofs all over the globe) like hypnotised lemmings. Harriet Jones and her aids are teleported up to the Sycorax ship and their exchange with the alien leader is mesmerising.

The scene where Rose breaks down and mourns the loss of the Ninth Doctor is genuinely touching. There she encapsulates how many a youngster might well have been feeling as they waited for the Doctor to recover (Piper proves she deserves all the accolades heaped upon her. Never before has a companion's emotional response to the Doctor changing his face and personality been so real).

If the story only really picks up at the half-way point, then it becomes must-see telly in the last fifteen minutes. The moment it all changes is a simple one: David Tennant emerges from the TARDIS fully born as the Tenth Doctor. Witty, unpredictable, staring, smiling, euphoric, angry, like Eccleston before him, he convinces us he is the Doctor and we embrace him. Our hero has come back to life. By the time he has chosen his pinstripe suit, World War Two trench coat and worn his old fashioned British National Health glasses, we have forgotten there ever were any previous Doctors.



The new *Doctor Who* returns with a triumphant tour de force holiday adventure that proudly proclaims its high production values while showcasing the ebullient charm that pours in waves from Tennant's Doctor.

As the closing credits roll, one cannot help but await with great eagerness the onset of Series Two. *The Christmas Invasion* is not the best *Doctor Who* adventure ever to grace our screens, but it is better than any first outing for a new Doctor since *Robot* and sets the pace for what is to follow.

NORTH AMERICA REVIEW • ARNOLD T. BLUMBERG

Well, here we go again...

Doctor, we barely knew ye. I was just getting really accustomed to Christopher Eccleston's Ninth Doctor when he has to get all heroic and lay down his life for the woman he loves. Now Rose Tyler, the girl who joined him on his new series of adventures back in March 2005, faces the same dilemma that viewers must face – it's time to get to know the Doctor all over again, this time in the form of actor David Tennant.

Our first real glimpse of the Tenth Doctor was in a special extra scene prepared especially for the *Children in Need* charity telethon that airs annually in the UK. It was a delightful post-regenerative conversation aired in November that established Rose's trepidation about the new Doctor and Tennant's talent for manic instability as the still regenerating Time Lord set the TARDIS controls for Christmas Eve, 2006. And off we went into Tennant's *real* debut, a 1-hour special titled "The Christmas

Invasion" that actually aired on December 25 and again on New Year's Day.

The TARDIS makes a spectacular crash landing outside Jackie Tyler's flat as Jackie and Mickey rush to greet Rose. But Rose has brought with her an ailing Doctor who soon falls into a coma just as a massive invasion by the tribal Sycorax reveals to an unprepared world that the human race is not alone. While Prime Minister Harriet Jones and UNIT attempt to handle the escalating situation without the Doctor, Rose struggles with the knowledge that she and the Doctor are helpless. It's beginning to look a lot like a very unmerry Christmas...

The new *Doctor Who* returns with a triumphant tour de force holiday adventure that proudly proclaims its high production values while showcasing the ebullient charm that pours in waves from Tennant's Doctor. True, he may be trying a bit too hard to capture the lunatic enthusiasm of Tom Baker, but then again, this is a debut story, and he has plenty of time to settle into the role. Supported very well by the regular cast—particularly co-star Billie Piper, who carries most of the story on her capable shoulders—Tennant only really emerges in full force in the final act of the tale. Once he's on screen, however, he owns the show, no question.

As befits a Christmas story, there are gifts aplenty hidden within for fans both new and old, from references to UNIT and the forthcoming spin-off *Torchwood* to a marvelous look at the TARDIS wardrobe which offers a glimpse of Tom Baker's iconic scarves and clothing from every previous Doctor's era. But yes, there are plenty of logical gaps in the somewhat threadbare plot, from the nonsensical preliminary attack of the 'Pilot Fish' aliens – a spinning Christmas tree, I ask you – to the somewhat shaky invasion plans of the Sycorax themselves. And then there's that whole moral dilemma at the end, with the Tenth Doctor playing Jon Pertwee to Harriet Jones' Brigadier (long-timers will know what I mean). But whether you agree that Harriet was justified or not, her possible political downfall may just introduce one of the first glaring continuity errors in the new show.

Then again, even those flaws are not enough to dampen the sheer joy that infuses every moment of this special. With the Christmas invasion thwarted and the Tenth Doctor taking Rose off to all new adventure, firmly leading the way with his brand new "fightin' hand," there has never been a better time to be a *Doctor Who* fan or indeed an aficionado of science fiction TV. "The Christmas Invasion" is not only a marvelous gift to Whovians everywhere, but a spectacular slice of holiday magic served up with love for the present, appreciation for the past, and hope for the future. If this one-hour extravaganza is any indication, that future is going to be..."fantastic."

Reviewed by Arnold T. Blumberg

doctor who: the complete first series



extras, and the BBC has certainly provided plenty of them. The extras fall into three types: the fifth disc that has the fourteen *Doctor Who Confidential* (including the previously unseen one for *The Christmas Invasion*), the short featurettes on each of the other discs, and the special commentaries on all the episodes.

When the new series was first broadcast on the BBC *Doctor Who Confidential* followed straight after it, on one of the BBC digital channels. These were originally broadcast as thirty-minute episodes, half of them given over to the new series and the other half looking back on how the original series treated the same themes. Unfortunately, due to copyright reasons (mainly over the music used), here are the cut-down versions of them, fifteen minutes

long instead of thirty minutes. All

All of us, who have seen the recent BBC television series of Doctor Who, or have read Issue 6 of Whotopia will by now have formed our own opinions about the first series of the new Doctor Who. We all have our favourite episodes and our least favourite ones; we've all formed opinions on Christopher Eccleston, Billie Piper and Russell T Davies; we've decided whether like the new look Tardis or not. Now, finally, the BBC has brought out the whole series in one DVD box set, but is it worth buying?

One of the reasons for getting this box set, after the complete series, would be for the

content about the new series is still here, but the look-back at the original series is gone. Fortunately these are still full of fascinating information about the production of the series, including an extra one looking behind the scenes at *The Christmas Invasion*, and still make very interesting viewing.

The featurettes contain some gems, though they are a mixed bag. The behind the scenes mini documentaries, though very rough and ready, they give a telling insight into the work that went into the series, especially Mike Tucker's model work – which appeared more often than

you would have thought. Mark Gatiss' video diary is a real find, that in conjunction with the featurette *The Origin of The Unquiet Dead*, giving a wonderful insight into the creation of a Doctor Who script. There are also the usual collection of interviews and trailers, though these are interesting and in-depth interviews – not the type were “everything” was “fabulous”.

The real find here are the commentaries to the different episodes. DVD commentaries have become a bit of a joke recently, with even *The Simpson's* making fun of them, but here they are insightful, interesting and funny. The highlights have to be the first and penultimate commentaries by Russell T Davies, Julie Gardner (Executive Producer) and Phil Collinson (Producer). They not only provide interesting insights but also are genuinely funny to listen to, you get the feeling these people are real friends. The other commentaries are no less interesting; Billie Piper, Steven Moffat, Shaun Dingwall, Annette Badland and John Barrowman are all excellent value. They have also managed to get a different range of people to give the commentaries, not just the usual director and leading actors, but including writers, supporting actors and even visual effects supervisors. This mix throws up some interesting stories and insights.

Once you have watched the episodes the commentaries give a different view into them, a view that doesn't detract from them.

Here is a box set that isn't just a whole series crammed onto DVD's with a token extra feature or two squeezed onto the last disc. Here there is almost an abundance of extras, extras that actually give insight into how the series was produced, from the writing through the acting and including the special effects. Here is a box set worth buying, though there's so much here you won't be able to watch it in a couple of evenings.

Ratings:

Episodes: 10/10

Extras: 8/10

Reviewed by Drew Payne

attack of the graske

Broadcast on BBC Interactive 25 December 2005.

In the 1980's we were given Fighting Fantasy novels, where the reader took an active part. You would read a section, at the end of which would be a selection of choices, which would lead you onto another section. On Christmas Day, after *The Christmas Invasion* had aired, BBC Interactive broadcast *Attack of the Graske* - in a way, a television equivalent of those old Fighting Fantasy novels.

BBC Interactive is the BBC's interactive digital service, available in the UK, whereby the viewer can interact with its programs or information broadcast, via their remote control. *Attack of the Graske* was a perfect vehicle for this interactive service.

Attack of the Graske was, certainly in cooperation to the new television series, a very straightforward story. The Graske, a race of short reptile-like creatures (Jimmy Vee under a lot of latex), who invade a world by capturing the inhabitants, one by one, and replacing them with their own doubles. The Doctor was on the trail of The Graske. First he tracked them down to modern day Britain, a family at Christmas, then to a Victorian street on Christmas Eve, and finally to the Graske's home planet. The twist here was that the Doctor was without Rose, and the viewer played the part of the companion.

Every minute or so the viewer was given a task (to identify the Graske double, find the Graske hiding place, etc.) and their choice was then reflected in

the story, especially the ending of the story. This, and the Doctor's chatty comments to camera, certainly made the viewer feel involved in it all.

This was written by Gareth Roberts, who has written several Big Finish audios and BBC Doctor Who novels (including the first Tenth Doctor novel), and he kept the pace running at a tight speed. David Tennant, in only his third outing as the Doctor, turned in a very satisfyingly energetic and yet still quirky performance. What did stand out here were the production values, which were extremely high with sharp CGI effects. This was surprising because this was only broadcast on BBC Interactive - and therefore with little chance of attracting high viewing figures. This would lead one to suspect it would have been produced very cheaply, yet this had almost as high production values as the television series. Money was certainly spent here and it paid off.

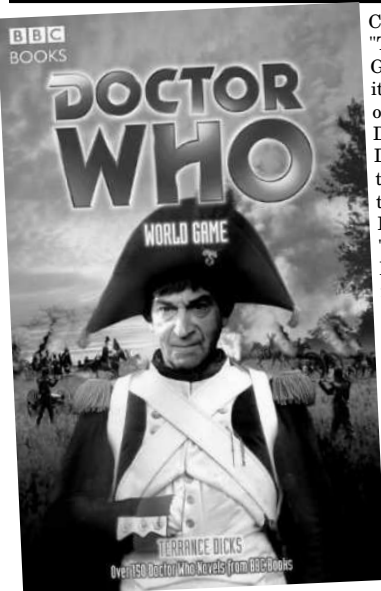
Attack of The Graske shouldn't be taken as part of the Doctor's ongoing adventures on Television, its story depth and emotional journey were both very low, but for sheer enjoyment and fun it rated very high. This was only a short, fifteen minute Doctor Who romp; the perfect addition to the roller coaster ride that had been *The Christmas Invasion*.

One final plea, if anyone from the BBC is reading this, can we have *Attack of The Graske* on the DVD release of *The Christmas Invasion*? It was fun. 7/10

Reviewed by Drew Payne



world game



Compare the War Games and its portrayal of the Second Doctor—the Doctor is on the run from the Time Lords—to "The Two Doctors" and its portrayal of the Second Doctor—the Doctor is acting as an agent of the Time Lords—and any reasonable fan would wonder at the discrepancy. So some reasonable fans came up with a novel theory, usually called "Season 6B"—after the Doctor's trial in "The War Games" he received a reprieve before his sentencing if he would act as an unofficial agent of the Time Lords, doing their dirty work so the Time Lords could continue to appear, to all outward appearances, to be the detached observers the universe believed them to be. An interesting idea, to be sure, and one used in several short stories where the Second Doctor performs missions for the Time Lords, but the story of how the Second Doctor became an agent of the Time Lords has never been told.

Until now.

Terrance Dicks's latest *Doctor Who* novel, *World Game*, picks up the Second Doctor's story at the conclusion of "The War Games" and details how the Doctor became an agent of the Celestial Intervention Agency. The Doctor's first mission? Partnered with a Time Lady named Serena as an unwilling companion, the Doctor travels to early 19th-century Earth and gets drawn into a plot by another temporal power aimed at altering the outcome of the Napoleonic Wars. For much of its length *World Game* positions itself firmly in the pure-historical mold, with the Doctor and

Serena interacting with Napoleon, Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, Horatio Nelson, and the French Foreign Minister, Talleyrand.

The characterizations in the novel play to Dicks's strengths as a writer—the Doctor sounds and acts like Troughton, Serena comes across as more than simply a clone of Romana, and the historical personages, especially Napoleon, are both interesting and credible. Where Dicks's writing fails him, though, is in setting the stage and evoking the setting—Dicks's Gallifrey lacks color or interest, and post-Revolutionary France is rather generic. *World Game* features an intricate plot and intriguing characters, but Terrance Dicks writes in such a dull, methodical manner that his prose all but sabotages the story he tells.

Yet, *World Game* is not without its points of interest. Terrance Dicks writes a wonderfully evocative Second Doctor, he creates a fascinating foil for the Second Doctor in Serena, and he writes a novel with a strong, interesting plot. *World Game* is not demanding, on par perhaps with a Target novelization, easily worth an afternoon's read. 6/10

Reviewed by Allyn Gibson

As we all know, Doctor Who began in 1963. A hard and fast rule that all of us accept. One slight problem though – I wasn't actually around in 1963. In fact I wasn't born until February 1970, about an hour following the original transmission of episode four of **Doctor Who And The Silurians** as it happens, so for me Doctor Who didn't 'start' until much later. And I seem to be in a minority amongst fans for I'm unable to name the first episode I ever saw. Its like trying to say when you first saw an aeroplane or when you first tasted chocolate, I was watching Doctor Who from such an early age that I really don't know what story I came in at or what moment first hooked me. I don't have a recollection of being surprised at seeing that the TARDIS was bigger on the inside; I always grew up knowing that it *was*, accepting it as fact. My sister, three years older than me, was a regular viewer of Doctor Who so I can only assume that I got into the habit by watching it with her.

It's possible that I saw some of season 8 the first time round but I really don't remember. Nor do I remember seeing any episodes in black and white. Although the Pertwee episodes were being shown in colour, the vast majority of households in the UK at that time still only had black and white television sets. I was lucky – my family got its first colour television relatively early, in 1972. Curiously I can remember it actually arriving but I can't remember watching everything in black and white on its predecessor. Such is the human mind...

But I digress! This is supposed to be about Doctor Who! And whilst I can't remember the first episode I ever saw, I do remember a few random moments from my earliest years of watching – such as a gold Dalek, *that* cliffhanger when the Sontaran Linx first takes his helmet off (which I *did* see in black and white, because I was at my nan's house at the time!), Alpha Centauri, and the Sea Devils. Enough to know that I was definitely a regular viewer during those Pertwee days. Pertwee's Doctor thus became a very familiar figure to me, as did Elisabeth Sladen as Sarah Jane Smith. Strangely Jo Grant and the UNIT men never really etched themselves into my memory at this period. There was something really magical and entrancing about the programme... It was mysterious and captivating, it was exciting and thrilling... Even Doctor Who himself, with his expressive lined face, big eyes, shock of white hair and fancy, colourful costume stood out from most of the other things I saw on television at that time. I don't think I ever wondered where he came from, how he came to have a TARDIS, why he had a strange name... I just accepted that he was *different*... But a friend, nevertheless.

In June 1974 one episode ended with a very strange thing happening. Doctor Who (the name I knew him by) seemed to die and change into somebody else. I don't think this unduly concerned me as I'd probably already acquired that instinct that, in television at least, everything was going to be alright. And I was right, wasn't I? Because when Doctor Who was next

“...the white haired Doctor was almost forgotten about. I liked this new Doctor Who more, he made me laugh which the other one never used to do. I'd found a new hero...”



on, just after Christmas, he still looked exactly the same. Except that the same thing happened again at the end.

What I had seen, of course, was an omnibus repeat of **Planet Of The Spiders**, and the very next day saw part one of **Robot** hit the screens. My Dad warned me beforehand that it would be well worth watching because there was a 'new

Doctor' in it. A new Doctor? Did that mean the white-haired man really had died? What could a new Doctor possibly look like? My tiny, inexperienced mind could only come up with one answer – doctors wore surgical outfits. Therefore that was what the new Doctor was sure to look like – a surgeon!

Of course the opening title sequence answered the question. “Oh no it's *him*!” I exclaimed in disgust as I recognised that stupid man with the curly hair that Doctor Who had changed into at the end of yesterday's episode. It made some sort of sense now, but I wasn't happy. I really couldn't see how I was going to continue enjoying Doctor Who if he was going to look like that from now on.

Those were my thoughts at the beginning of **Robot**. I remember quite vividly the scene of the Doctor stepping out of the TARDIS in a variety of different costumes and I think even by then (ten minutes into the episode, if that?) the white haired Doctor was almost forgotten about. I liked this new Doctor Who more, he made me laugh which the other one never used to do. I'd found a new hero.

And what a hero he was going to be! I also liked Harry, a new character in the series that was in every episode like Sarah Jane Smith was. From this point on more and more memories survive of my watching the programme – avidly. I definitely saw at least part of *every* Tom Baker story on its original transmission and in all likelihood I probably missed an epi-



sode only on very rare occasions.

Why was I enjoying watching it so much? It was colourful, it was exciting, it was occasionally funny and, of course, there were *monsters* in it! I was too young to really understand the plots, of course, but that held true for most of the programmes I saw when I was 5 years old. Doctor Who worked because it had clearly defined 'goodies' and 'baddies' and it was always entertaining following the struggle between the two.

One of the breakfast serials I used to eat then (and still do!) was Weetabix and what a joy it was when all of a sudden you could find Doctor Who picture cards hidden inside the packet. In fact there were Doctor Who pictures all over the box including a big scene on the back such as the inside of the TARDIS. Some packets had a picture card of Doctor Who himself, some had Sarah Jane Smith, and all of them had a Dalek... And it was exciting to occasionally come across another monster I recognised, such as Linx or a Sea Devil. Most of them I didn't know. I suppose realisation must have dawned that there were Doctor Who adventures I'd never even seen. The characters intrigued me, not least a robotic figure that I felt compelled to ask my Mum about. "That's a Cyberman," she told me. I liked the name. I got her to cut out the picture of the Cyberman that was on the side of the Weetabix box so that I could keep it.

Imagine what a surprise I got when, just a few weeks later, I found Cybermen leering at me from the television screen! They were truly awesome, with guns in their heads I didn't see how Doctor Who could ever beat them, but he did. He always managed to win. Those other monsters in the same story looked creepy too, I didn't know their names but I was never quite sure whether they were goodies or baddies. Another character, which fascinated me at around the same time, was Davros, although at the time I thought his name was Stabros – that's what it sounded like!

The next season of Doctor Who I found really scary, far more than ever before. The Zygon (disguised as Harry) hunting Sarah down in the barn, the Doctor falling into the black pool on Zeta Minor, mummies stalking the poacher through the woods, Marcus Scarman's horrifying face all sent shivers down my spine. Even worse was to come – Sarah's face falling off to reveal that she was really an android was terrifying stuff, whilst the colossal size of the Krynoid, sitting on top of a mansion house, reduced me to a nervous wreck! What sheer joy it was to be frightened like this!

The Masque Of Mandragora I found extremely boring once the initial walk around the

TARDIS interior had finished, but a disembodied hand in the next story was far more entertaining. Until the hand grew into a funny-looking person and then it started to get a bit boring again. But Sarah Jane Smith left! That was quite a surprise but I wasn't too concerned, she was only a girl after all. As long as Doctor Who himself was staying, that was the main thing! I do remember being a little concerned about Sarah though – the TARDIS had dropped her off in the wrong street. How on earth was she going to get home?

The Deadly Assassin was very exciting to watch. Doctor Who was on his own world, then he was in this other place where men with gas-masks were trying to run him down with steam trains (a cliff-hanger that was far more scary and memorable than the controversial drown-

“One of the breakfast serials I used to eat then (and still do!) was Weetabix and what a joy it was when all of a sudden you could find Doctor Who picture cards hidden inside the packet.”



ing one, I thought!) and there was also this creepy monster called the Master. What really amazed me was that this Master character didn't get killed – he escaped at the end in a grandfather clock! Even at the age of 6 I knew what this meant – one day he would be back to fight the Doctor again!

Leela joined the show next, which I didn't seem too bothered about either way, though I found **The Face Of Evil** pretty unmemorable. **The Robots Of Death** was an enjoyable story though but what about **The Talons Of Weng Chiang** – brilliant! Giant rats lurking in the sewers, that sinister Chinese mannequin, and then that Greel bloke who had a deformed face under his mask, all in a creepy dark foggy setting. It never quite managed to frighten me as much as some of the previous season's stories but it was still terrific to watch.

As was **The Horror Of Fang Rock**, but that one *did* scare me a lot. Not so much with isolated moments but there was an unceasing sense of danger because I knew that *thing* was lurking down in the lighthouse's generator

room and that if anyone went down there they were going to get killed. I wanted to warn the Doctor and Leela that they should get away from there or they'd be next!

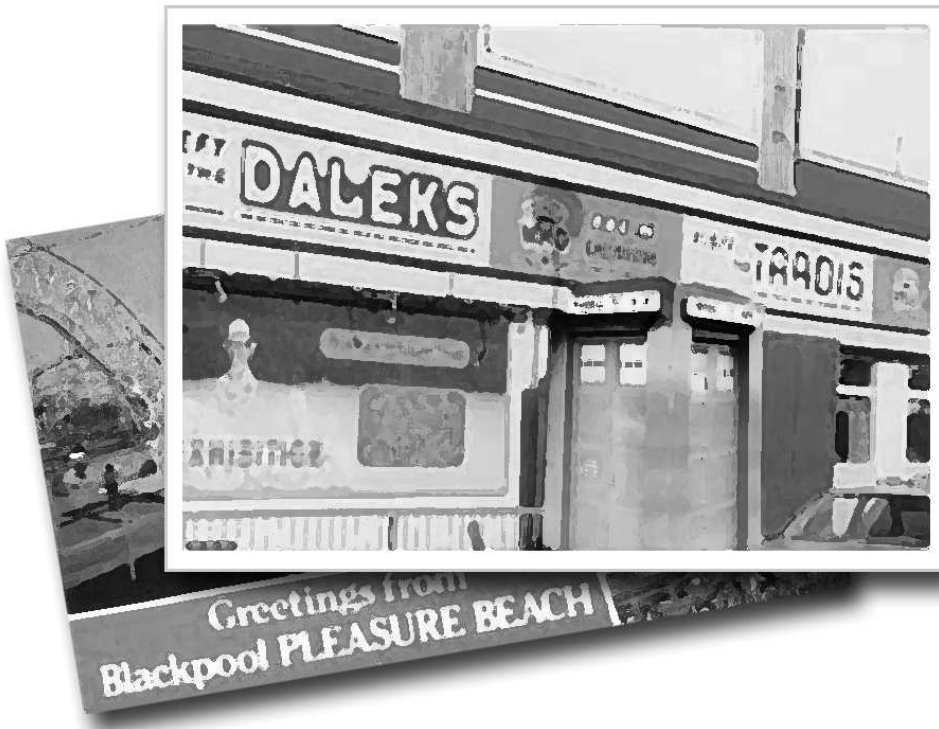
The Invisible Enemy introduced me to a new experience in watching Doctor Who. At the age of just 7, I was now a critic. And though I couldn't quite put my finger on what it was, there was something about this Doctor Who story, it just didn't *look* as good as the others. And whilst the next story, **The Image Of The Fendahl** was just as good, as dark and as frightening as the best Doctor Who stories, the next few after that also seemed to lack something, I thought. There was something about the way they looked. I did like the Collector in **The Sunmakers** though, and the way Leela nearly met her end in the steam machine. **Underworld** was just boring, I never really knew what was going on in that one, and **The Invasion Of Time** was interesting as it took me back to Gallifrey. I was hoping the Master might turn up but no; it was just some other baddies (who, bizarrely, I never recognised as being Sontarans at all, even though Linx had been one of my favourite monsters!)

I did like K-9 though and was relieved when it turned out he was staying. Leela left unexpectedly but I took this in my stride because I'd seen Sarah Jane leave and the programme had carried on without any problems.

There was no doubt that Doctor Who was still one of my favourite programmes. To enhance my enjoyment there had been a second Weetabix promotion in

1977 (which I didn't think was as good as the first one, but I still enjoyed it) and there were now some Doctor Who dolls out in the shops including a TARDIS which, according to the publicity material, was a real working time machine that would make the Doctor Who doll disappear through time. I wanted one! I *had* to have one! And lucky boy that I was, I got Doctor Who and his TARDIS that Christmas. It was a bit of a swizzle really, the TARDIS never sent him through time at all, and it just hid him so that it *looked* like he'd disappeared. Ah well, it was still a great toy and the only disappointment came from the fact that the accompanying sonic screwdriver snapped as soon as I tried to fit it into the Doctor's hand. I got a Doctor Who board game for Christmas too, though it didn't really have a lot to do with the television series – not a single Dalek or Cyberman to be seen!

Also during the winter months of 1977/78 my parents took my sister and I to the seaside town of Blackpool to see its famous illuminated displays, which was a wonderful time. One of the highlights of the visit, however, was encounter-



ing a Doctor Who exhibition there, going inside a police box, down into some dark underground passageways and coming face-to-face with real Daleks and other monsters like the Giant Robot which I remembered from 'years' ago! To find myself in the TARDIS control room was incredible but equally it was very frustrating because glass shields protected the console so that I couldn't try out the controls. And then at the end of it all was this shop that sold nothing but Doctor Who things! My jaw must have dropped on seeing the different things they had for sale – even the Cyberman doll, which I knew, was available but had never managed to spot in the shops back home! All I actually got bought for me was a postcard and a badge but I was happy. Blissfully happy!

A school trip to the local library in 1978 resulted in my friends and I browsing the bookshelves until one of them excitedly held up a Doctor Who book. Others, myself included, and then swooped to see where he had found it and there, sure enough, were several others. We were each allowed to borrow two books so I selected **Revenge Of The Cybermen** and another Doctor Who novel that I've since forgotten. As I handed them in my teacher commented "Oh, a Doctor Who fan eh?" I'd never really thought about it before but yes, I suppose I was...

Doctor Who had been and still was very much a talking point amongst most of my friends at school and fresh discussions broke out late in August 1978 when the new series was trailed. The trailer showed a succession of brief images

from the forthcoming series, all to the theme music so there was no explanatory dialogue. The shot, which had me the most excited, was of a man whose face seemed to be split down the middle – one side was normal, the other side was robotic! I sat through **The Ribos Operation** waiting for this character to show up but he didn't. Of course it was the Pirate Captain I'd seen who finally turned up in the following story. I enjoyed the 'Key To Time'

"A school trip to the local library in 1978 resulted in my friends and I browsing the bookshelves until one of them excitedly held up a Doctor Who book."



season but I still thought that the programme wasn't quite as good as it used to be. It didn't seem to frighten me as much anymore, the monsters didn't look quite as good, the stories didn't seem to engage me quite as much. Even when one of the 'great' monsters came back, like the androids in **The Androids Of Tara** (which I sort of rationalised as being the same type of androids as in **The Android Invasion**) they didn't seem to be quite as good. No face-

falling-off-the-companion moments to freak me out this time. But it was still one of my favourite programmes and one I always watched if I could possibly help it. And by now my love of the programme was manifesting itself in other ways such as drawing the monsters.

The following season brought fresh excitement because, after what seemed like an eternity, the Daleks were finally coming back. I hadn't seen them in a new Doctor Who story for four-and-a-half years! And that's a very long time for a 9-year-old, I can assure you! *Everyone* was excited about it. So it was with great anticipation that I sat down to watch **Destiny Of The Daleks** episode 1 on that warm Saturday evening in September 1979. The Romana regeneration sequence was quite fun, I thought, and it never puzzled me that she might be throwing lives away – I probably wasn't aware of the 12-regeneration limit anyway. I just wished she hadn't changed into that awful Princess Astra whom I had found so wet and annoying in the previous series. And, like the young viewers who had similarly anticipated **The Dalek Invasion Of Earth** in 1964 or **Day Of The Daleks** in 1972, I was so cheesed off that the episode finished just as the Daleks made their appearance! The next episode's ending was even more dramatic for me – 'Stabros' was back! That was something I really hadn't been expecting, because I'd remembered him getting *killed*. I'd seen him shot by the Daleks and no one ever survived that, did they? Now he was back, Stabros – or Davros, as I now learnt his name actually was – immediately became my favourite Doctor Who character. I thought he should have been in every story, maybe even had his own series. I wanted a Davros costume!

City Of Death was also great to watch, I really liked the Jagaroth and his unmasking at the end of episode one. The foreign location filming was totally lost on me – I was so wrapped up in other details that I couldn't have cared less where the story was set, and as everyone was speaking in English I often lost sight of the fact that it was all taking place in another country, even though I recognised the Eiffel Tower.

Doctor Who was riding high again in my affections but it was still a television programme and nothing more. All that was to change, however. In the same month that **City Of Death** was being broadcast, Marvel Comics launched **Doctor Who Weekly**. My enjoyment of Doctor Who was suddenly going to change somewhat as I became... a fan.

Article by David May

David's memoirs will continue in the next issue of Whotopia

only human

This BBC 9th Doctor book is the 5th book out of 6, and is generally regarded to be of a better standard than the 5 books before it.

Gareth Roberts is a very experienced writer when it comes to Doctor Who and is an author who usually includes a lot of wit and humour – the most memorable of which has to be Captain Jack's 'distraction', making his books always an enjoyable read.

The Novel focuses on the effects of a Neanderthal accidentally being transported through time and having to settle down in a new time period, as well as a ghastly experiment for new creatures back in prehistoric times.

Only Human manages to encompass the feel of both present day and prehistoric Earth, and drags the reader into the story by having the later half of the present day Earth story written as diary entries / first person from both Captain Jack and the Neanderthal.

Not only is this book brilliantly written with Gareth Roberts' usual memorable lines and witty dialogue, but builds up clearly in a relatively short novel both what the time travelers that are causing the problem are like, and the feel of what it would be like to be walking around on prehistoric Earth when you are from the future.

This Novel raises the implications of special drugs to make you happy, and the way in which this could

mean that you'd never question what your boss is asking you to do or have any feelings towards anyone else.

When it comes down to it **Only Human** is a gripping book that has a clear prediction of what the future could be like, as well as the implications caused by this. The emotion drugs give a clear moral of why you should be you and not pretend to be someone else – building a bit more strongly on the ideas of emotion

“Only Human manages to encompass the feel of both present day and prehistoric Earth...”

being a weakness that was evident in the Cybermen stories of the classic series.

One problem with this, like the other NDA's, is the length. Although shorter than the classic series books, however, **Only Human** still manages to build up a clear picture of the surroundings and have a good plot, while maintaining the faster pace of the new series (something which **The Clockwise Man** failed to do).

Only Human is one of the best NDA's (second only to

Stealers Of Dreams) as it not only manages to capture the feel and pace of the new series, but also has Gareth Roberts' usual humorous writing, if not in such a large quantity, and gets the characterisation of Jack spot on.

An easy read and enjoyable tale that anyone who likes the more humorous Doctor Who books is bound to enjoy. **10/10**

Reviewed by Claire Chaplin



singularity



Peter Davison and Mark Strickson make a long overdue and welcome return in this cracking story that spans the eons between the near future Russia and the end of creation.

One of the joys of hearing this pairing in action comes in part from the very different dynamic you get between the pairing of Turlough and the Doctor, as compared to say Peri or Nyssa. More traveling companions than close friends, there is a level of tension and antagonism here that is absent from other Doctor/companion combinations. In *Singularity*, Turlough is at the end of his tether, more prepared to stay in bed than roam Moscow, questioning his continued

“There's a real sense of poignancy present in the story, which provides much of the human touch in an otherwise cold tale of extinction and a desperate bid to survive it.”

presence with the Doctor. For his part, the Doctor seems to derive entertainment from needling Turlough. Though as later revealed, this is a cover for a genuine sorry at the loss of friend after friend throughout his journeys. It's an interest dynamic that allows the listener to see inside these characters a bit more than we are used to.

Singularity manages that rare feat of simultaneously being a wide ranging epic of universe shaking importance, while also being a heartfelt examination of family and loss. Lena Korolev seeks to free her brother, Alexi, from the cult of the Somnus, a sinister cult that promises evolutionary advancement to its adherents, via personality realignment, literally. All this is tied in with the desperate attempts of a crippled race to escape their fate at the end of time.

Singularity is an entertaining, thoughtful story which unfolds in a considered manner. The Doctor's natural inquisitiveness and Turlough's reluctant chivalry are catalysts for the events which follow. There is a real sense of tension as writer James Swallow ratchets up the tension, especially in episode two. The revelations of the final aims of the Somnus Foundation are awesome in their scope, and terrible in their application.

There's a real sense of poignancy present in the story, which provides much of the human touch in an otherwise cold tale of extinction and a desperate bid to survive it.

Lena and Alexi are both scarred by the death of their mother. Whereas Lena has shouldered the burden of keeping her family together, her brother has taken the easy route, seeking solace in the fantasies of the Somnus Foundation. When Lena opens up to Turlough about the burden she labors under, we get an insight into both characters, allowing us to see the strains both live with. Similarly, the Doctor opens the shutters a little to reveal the weight of the centuries upon him, revealing that his companions are his family, and the loss of each affects him deeply.

There's a surprise revelation about the nature of the alien force behind the Somnus Foundation which I won't reveal here, and of their knowledge and hatred of the Doctor for future transgressions. The relationship between Qel and Seo is one of rivalry and mutual antipathy, a stark contrast to the bonds which tie the human characters together. It is this shared dislike which the Doctor is able to play on to great effect towards the end and neatly highlights the great strength and weakness of humanity – the constant struggle for survival.

As is usual, the baseline elements of any Big Finish release – music, sound effects, are top notch. Coupled with some lovely performances and strong writing, *Singularity* is another great entry for 2005, and one I can heartily recommend. **9/10**

Reviewed by Rob Mammone

the visitation

The historical stories in Doctor Who's catalogue of programmes have always divided viewers and fans alike. In early years, when the programme's mission was to provide thoughtful and even educational insights into Man's past and future, they were seen as essential. Stories like "The Massacre" and "The Aztecs" were the educational vegetables to the sweet fluff of science fiction and monsters. In many ways, those early historicals remain unsurpassed by anything the programme did since. Certainly "The Aztecs" and "Marco Polo" are excellent examples of BBC script writing and set-design imagination at their best. But the viewing public's appetite for Daleks, Cybermen and other bug-eyed horrors could not be ignored. After trying with stories like "The Romans" and "The Gunfighters" to rewrite the historical as a vehicle for comedy, the genre of pure historical was quietly dropped. In its place came "The War Games" and "The Time Warrior", where the past was there to provide a backdrop for the usual antics of Timelords and aliens - rather as history functioned in films like the Carry On series.

Purist Doctor Who fans have tended to sneer at "The Visitation" for precisely this reason. The shoe-horning of the alien plague idea into the events leading up to the Great Fire of London seems awkward; the historical presence and period logic of most of the minor characters is virtually non-existent ("Oo-ar villager acting", as Peter Davison comments). The idea that the TARDIS crew are travellers "in history" is also treated very lazily. Why, for example, does Nyssa think that the computer board the Doctor gives to Richard Mace at the end of the story will "confuse the archaeologists", but yet makes no mention of the escape pod and control room left back at the manor house? (Or, indeed, the bracelets and powerpacks left on the controlled villagers' wrists?) Why does the exploding Soliton gas machine become part of historical events but not the Terileptil's plague?

And yet, at the same time, "The Visitation" is a undoubtedly Doctor Who gem, combining great characters, locations and dialogue. The story opens with one of the most unusual prologues to a Doctor Who story since "Mission to the Unknown" introduced "The Dalek Masterplan". In this prologue, we are introduced to a crotchety old squire who drinks too much, his doting young daughter Elizabeth, his gun-handling son Charles and the servant Ralph. They are perhaps some of the most fully-developed characters in any Doctor Who story, and it seems such a shame when they're all killed off within the first five minutes. This depth of characterisation luckily extends to Richard Mace, Eric Seward's Actor-Highwayman character pulled from one of his radio plays and given delightfully over-the-top life by the fruity-voiced Michael Robbins. Being an actor, he gets all the best lines, eclipsing the entire regular cast the moment he makes his appearance (Seward not only also gives him the best lines in his novelisation, he even gives him new ones that are even better). Even the monsters fare well. Although the Terileptils look a little wooden to modern eyes, their imaginative costumes are well designed and thoughtfully executed (note the different skin textures for each Terileptil). In appearance they resemble mediaeval woodcuts of ancient devils, prefiguring the design concept so central to the plot of "The Awakening". Seward's script gives the surviving Terileptil trio individuality, aesthetic sensibility, logic and a glimpse into a fully-functioning society. Michael Melia imparts a sense of doomed honour and even a little humour into the fugitive Terileptil, points of characterisation that further enhance the story. The period setting of the Manor House is superbly evoked

by the locations and the sets - the barn set deserves particular praise and mention - and gives the production the kind of solid, grounded feel a historically-placed story needs.

But it's not all perfect - there are holes in the execution that still grate. The sidelining of Nyssa seems unfair and the sonic booster sub-plot seem unweildy and a bit deus ex machina. And twenty-three years on, I still find the destruction of the sonic screwdriver a bit petty. Wobbly-set spotters will no doubt be able to place the sections of the Terileptil's consoles in other stories (and even, possibly, in broadcasts of "Top of the Pops"), and the android's cricket gloves are badly disguised and detract from the otherwise successfully unusual design. The DVD's extras unfortunately don't include a Matthew Waterhouse-less version of the story, meaning that every awkward gesture and out of place intonation is captured in perfect digital reproduction. Captured in crystal-clear detail too are the awful scenic backcloths used on the escape pod set that were not only as bad as I remembered them, they were worse. But these are niggling details.

The uninspired extras on the DVD are a little more than niggling, however, and let the disc down. I still don't quite understand who would want to watch the story with only the music soundtrack running, and the interview between Marc Ayres and Paddy Kingsland wasn't half as interesting as it should have been. The Eric Seward and Peter Moffatt pieces are alright, but you do feel as if you're just getting a rehash of convention anecdotes that have been doing the rounds for years. The photo gallery isn't particularly memorable, and the film trims are equally meaningless. The extras are lifted considerably by the commentary. Peter Davison, Janet Fielding, Sarah Sutton, Matthew Waterhouse and Peter Moffatt are very good together. It was a shame they couldn't have expounded on some of the stuff in the commentary and generated some new material, such as short documentaries on the locations (Why couldn't we see the nuclear shelter at the Hurley house? Or what about Rolf Harris' reminiscences?), the historical background, the designers - anything, really.

What makes the timing of this DVD release so interesting is to see how little the pattern for a Doctor Who "historical" has changed since 1982. Fast forward to "The Unquiet Dead" and you can see how it faithfully



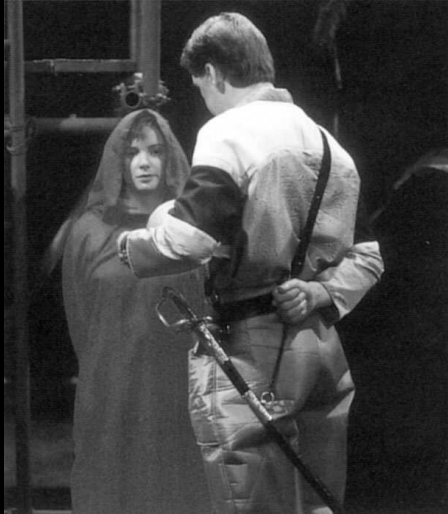
What makes the timing of this DVD release so interesting is to see how little the pattern for a Doctor Who "historical" has changed since 1982.

echoes the conventions used in "The Visitation". As the new series of Doctor Who goes on to its second, third and fourth seasons, it'd be nice to think that the programme could become established enough to play around with these old modes of presentation and storytelling. While it's unlikely that we'll ever see another story like "The Aztecs", there's still a chance that the new series might yet throw up a writer confident enough to break the mould so clearly in evidence in "The Visitation". Until then, the release of this DVD is a welcome opportunity for us all to refamiliarise ourselves with one of the real highlights of both Season 19 and of the Peter Davison era. 7/10

Reviewed by John Gordon

retroplay

the caves of androzani



season: 21
production code: 6R
directed by: graeme harper
written by: robert holmes

First Transmitted:

1	08/03/1984	6:40
2	09/03/1984	6:40
3	15/03/1984	6:40
4	16/03/1984	6:40

***The Caves of Androzani** marks the end of an era – the end for the 5th Doctor.*

Set on Androzani Minor the focus of this story is on the life-prolonging drug Spectrox and the battles between people to get hold of it.

Sharaz Jek is a very memorable character who blames Morgus, a powerful industrialist on Androzani Major, for all his misfortunes. He is stuck on Androzani Major and throughout the story is trying to stop government troops sent to liberate the drug.

The Caves of Androzani is essentially a story about two different sides trying to get hold of the Spectrox. However it is not as simple as that. The gunrunners hired by Sharaz Jek to provide weaponry for his androids, are in fact secretly employed by Morgus. As Sharaz Jek makes payments for the weaponry in Spectrox, Morgus is already getting what he wants.

It is also the classic tale of corruption from

within the government – because, although the government troops have been sent to liberate the Spectrox, Morgus is still helping Sharaz Jek by being the one secretly behind the gunrunners as this means that he gets a monopoly on the Spectrox.

So where do the Doctor and Peri fit in? Well it is the classic case scenario of getting caught up between two fighting factions, both of which believing that they are working with the other side. But it is also a tale of survival and sacrifice, as both Peri and the Doctor have been infected by the raw version of the Spectrox – which causes Spectrox Toxemia.

The cure for which is bats milk – but to do this, the Doctor first has to be free from both sides of the battle-taking place, and also has to have enough strength left to go and get it.

It is the story of the Spectrox Toxemia that makes **Caves of Androzani** show perfectly the 5th Doctor's compassionate side, and how much he cares for his companions. A complete difference to what we were to later see with the Doctor that is introduced in this story.

The stories main continuity point is of course how the Doctor regenerates. However it also includes something that I'm sure many of us thought would never be explained. Yes, the explanation to why exactly the Doctor wears a stick of celery on his lapel.

It is apparently, because the Doctor is allergic to certain gasses, and when these are present the celery turns purple. However, although it is satisfactory to have an explanation, it goes on to mention that all the Doctor can do after this is eat the celery because it's good for his teeth, meaning that although it identifies those gasses it doesn't help in anyway. If this had been relevant to the plot in anyway then it would have been more understandable. As it is it exits just to be a nice bit of trivia for people to remember, and a moment of humour in a story that is for the most part very hard hitting and emotional.

The regeneration scene yet again manages to keep the same wonder as the four before it, but yet be different at the same time. Apparently feeling 'different this time', the meaning of which is still open to speculation, the Doctor sees old companions persuading him to regenerate – plus an image of the Master trying to persuade him to die.

Unlike many of the regeneration stories – we actually hear the new Doctor speak. This does leave you with a sense of unease about what

***The Caves of Androzani** marks the end of an era*

the new Doctor is like, which is good in a way as it makes you look forward to the next story. Unfortunately that story was **The Twin Dilemma**.

The Doctor regenerates because he saves Peri's life – it is a noble act of sacrifice that sums up everything that the Doctor stands for and what he does. **Caves of Androzani** manages to show the 5th Doctor at his best, and shows precisely what an exceptional Doctor Who story should be like.

As with any story there are still little niggles making it not perfect, but then if it was it wouldn't seem right. Goofs wise this story has less than a lot of the other stories, but there is one glaringly obvious one near the beginning when Peri falls in the Spectrox, and bounces back up into the view of the camera.

There is one problem with visual effects that is sadly worth mentioning as well, and that is the Magma Beast lurking around in the caves near to Sharaz Jek's base – it has no need to be there, it is poorly designed, and it has nothing whatsoever to add to the plot. It is evident that it was there purely for the cliffhanger to episode 2. It is the only thing that really detracts from this marvelous story, but then the same could be said of **The Talons of Weng-Chiang** and the rat.

Overall **Robert Holmes'** writing yet again delivers a brilliant story that not only will be fondly remembered by many, but also builds up clear views of the characters and civilization making the story believable. Coming after a Dalek and Master story respectively, **The Caves Of Androzani** manages to surpass both without really having a villain. Sharaz Jek is the nearest person to the villain of the piece but with his built up past you are more likely to be sorry for him than treat him as a real villain. It is the classic question of distinguishing between right and wrong a lot of which is caused from bitterness between Sharaz Jek and Morgus.

Regarded by many to be one of the best Doctor Who stories, **The Caves of Androzani** is an engaging, enjoyable tale that thoroughly deserves its classic status. No Doctor Who collection is complete without it.

Article by Claire Chaplin

20 Questions with... LISA BOWERMAN

WHAT BOOK(S) ARE YOU READING RIGHT NOW?

"The English" by Jeremy Paxman and "The Devil's Chaplain" by Richard Dawkins.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE WAY TO SPEND A RAINY DAY?

Inside.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE SMELL?

Fresh coffee and freesias.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE SOUND?

Birdsong.

WHAT IS THE WORST FEELING IN THE WORLD?

The worst feeling in the world!

WHAT IS THE FIRST THING YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU WAKE UP IN THE MORNING?

What's the weather like?

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE COLOR?

Anything autumnal.

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IN LIFE?

Laughing.

WHOM WOULD YOU CONSIDER YOUR HERO?

Don't really have one.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE FOOD?

Between, crispy duck and my mother's Sunday roast.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE DRINK?

Varies (...that's not a drink!)

STORMS: EXCITING OR SCARY?

Exciting!

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST CAR?

Volkswagen Polo.

IF YOU COULD MEET ONE PERSON, DEAD OR ALIVE, WHO WOULD IT BE?

Oh dear... lost for inspiration—perhaps Shakespeare.

IF COULD HAVE ANY OTHER JOB OTHER THAN THE ONE YOU ARE CURRENTLY DOING, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I already have 2 jobs - so, if I'm not doing one, I'm doing the other! (Photography by the way.)

WHOM OR WHAT INSPIRES YOU MOST?

People who do what they say.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE MOVIES?

The Third Man, Witness, When Harry Met Sally, The Philadelphia Story, Magnolia, Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?

WHAT WAS YOUR PROUDEST MOMENT?

When my father got the O.B.E.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED FOR?

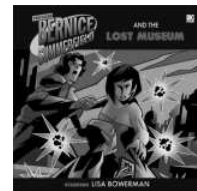
Just to be remembered would be nice!



WHAT'S ONE THING THAT PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I like gardening.

Whotopia would like to thank Lisa for taking time out of her busy schedule to answer our questions.



Lisa can currently be heard as the voice of Professor Bernice Summerfield in the Big Finish audio drama "Bernice Summerfield and the Lost Museum".

spiral scratch



Spiral Scratch is written by Gary Russell now more known these days as the Dr. Who producer for Big Finish productions but he was once the editor of Doctor

"Spiral Scratch is special because it also gives the sixth Doctor a closure and some dignity which he was never allowed in his all too brief TV run..."

two previous novels **Business Unusual** which provided Mel with her introductory story which was denied to her in the original TV run and **Instruments of Darkness** which finished off a Doctor Who trilogy which Gary began with **Scales of Injustice**.

Spiral Scratch is special because it also gives the sixth Doctor a closure and some dignity which he was never allowed in his all too brief TV run of eight stories which was hampered by poor scripts and poor production decisions the sixth Doctor is given a proper reason to regenerate the poor excuse of a bump on the head is no more.

If you get past the rather bright cover you are in for a treat. Gary Russell had said before now that he felt that Colin Baker got a bum deal when he took over the role of the Doctor in 1984 and he wanted to show us what the 6th Doctor was capable of given good stories and decent

scripts. He has been doing it for years now with the Big Finish audio's and he does it again with this book it's clear from Gary's writing style that he enjoys writing for the sixth Doctor and Mel the Doctor is not the rather shouty version of Season 22 but the quieter and maturer version of Season 23. Mel in this book is a strong young lady not the Mel we see in Season 24 who screams and calls for the Doctor every 5 minutes.

The Doctor and Mel arrive on Carsus to see professor Rummas but he has been murdered the Doctor takes it upon himself to find his murderer as well as solve the mystery of a contracting multiverse.

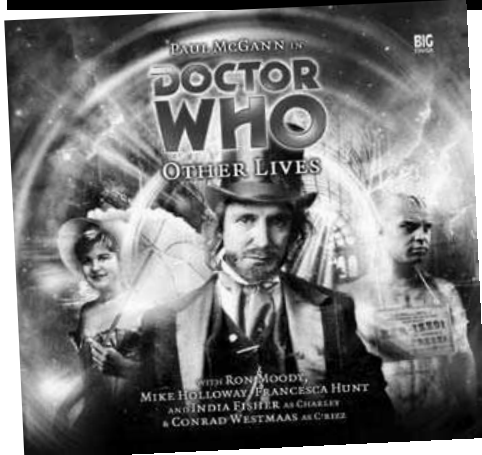
With the ties that bind the Lamprey family to the past present and future unraveling around him only the Doctor can stop the descent into temporal chaos but versions of himself are all ready dealing with other problems he is lost on Janus 8 and Schyllus and a 20th Century Earth where Rome never fell.

If this is the last sixth Doctor book it's a good one to finish on. Gary also gives fans what they have been crying out for a regeneration for the sixth Doctor that Colin Baker himself would be proud of. **6/10**

Reviewed by Ben Brown

Who magazine during this time he also wrote the odd Dr. Who book like **Legacy** for Virgin books. **Spiral Scratch** sees Gary write for a TARDIS team that he is familiar with - the sixth Doctor and Mel using this team he wrote

other lives



guishes itself with humor and witty banter. While the innuendo in Charley's description of the Palace is obvious, there is much to smile at during the rest of the opening scene in the TARDIS.

Soon separated by events, each regular takes up a different strand of the story. Charley befriends the Duke of Wellington and almost turns prostitute, C'Rizz is forcibly engaged as a circus freak, while the Doctor discovers the wife he never knew he had. Of course, these brief descriptions are necessarily glib. Each strand makes for entertaining listening, and eventually dovetail with the other.

As mentioned earlier, the plot, basically stopping an attempt to incite a Republican revolution in Britain, is slight, and often ignored throughout the story. The real heart of this release lies in the relationships each crew member establishes. For Charley, it is with the Duke of Wellington (and to a lesser extent, the outrageously named Mr. Rufus Dimplesqueeze), sympathetically played by Ron Moody, who displays a mixture of introspection for days long past, and bombast.

C'Rizz outrage at his enslavement is mixed with desperation to escape with his fellow inmate, Max the Midget. Hopkins carefully highlights the difference between the two - C'Rizz determination for freedom, with Max's tired acknowledgment that in Victorian society, the place best suited for him is as a fed and housed freak. Conrad Westmaas is to be congratulated for his performance, which moves from incredulity, to murderous rage seamlessly. C'Rizz is a prob-

"Other Lives is a triumph..."

lematic character for this writer, in that by virtue of his appearance, most visits to Earth would be necessarily circumscribed. I also get the feeling that there is a lack of spark between the McGann/Fisher combine and Westmaas. Or it just may be me.

The Doctor falls in with a woman who believes him to be her long lost husband. McGann evokes sympathy, his distress at Mrs. Marlow's situation mixed with a curiosity and even yearning to put aside his life and take up the role of husband and father. McGann is a constantly pleases in his role as the Doctor. Unfettered by the expectations of years on television in the role, unlike his three predecessors, McGann has freedom to move in his interpretation. His musings here about giving it all up for family are entirely within character.

The real triumph of this play is Gary Hopkins. There is effortlessness to his writing that is pleasing. Writing which is forced is easy to spot, and painful to listen to, whereas words which flow like water are always a pleasure to hear. Hopefully we'll be hearing more from him soon.

Other Lives, then, is a triumph, a well crafted and well acted tale that at turns will make you laugh, then making you feel. An instant classic. **10/10**

Reviewed by Rob Mammone

The one thing that you need to know about *Other Lives* is that the actual plot is mere window-dressing. Everything else is a wonderful combination of heartfelt acting and clever writing.

Gary Hopkins previous Big Finish effort was the gloom laden turn off, *The Last*. Thankfully he has cast aside those dour sensibilities and has crafted a funny, witty, at times sad story which resonates long after it has finished.

Essentially the misadventures of the TARDIS crew in Victorian London; *Other Lives* immediately distin-

the time travellers

Mad time travel experiments and duplicates seem to be all the rage these days don't they, and *The Time Travellers* has more than a touch of *The Last Resort* and *Spiral Scratch* about it. Saying that, it scores over both of those books by having some shocking twists in the mix and some glorious characterisation, that makes it as good (but not *better*) than the other debut novel this year, Nick Wallace's *Fear Itself*. Whilst I finished this book with a few loose threads hanging in my mind I fear it was my attention that is at fault and another read of this will prove all the answers I need. Besides re-reading a book as tasty as this should be no hassle at all, and perhaps even more rewarding than my initial read.

Popular in recent years are books with an extremely complicated non-linear narrative but *The Time Travellers* has just enough explanations to guide you effortlessly through its pages without turning your brain to mush. The way the book dishes out the answers to the hundreds of mysteries set up is skilfully done, and it continues to surprise and confuse right up until the climax. I love this sense of unreality these time travel books create, with people leaping about through time and playing God, making up their own timeline just by being in the wrong place at the wrong time you are left with the constant impression that this is **WRONG**...

Rather than concentrating on characters from our reality in alternative universes (which is about as popular as mud these days) the book actually seems to suggest that this is alternative characters hopping over to *our* universe. However this simply cannot be the case, I thought at the climax everything would be ironed out and history would be back on track. However, it appears that when the first Doctor eventually meets up with a certain villain later on in his run everything in this book will be erased. Oh my I've just gone cross-eyed trying to think about it. Unless things really are different now and this *is* what happened in which case a certain Hartnell story needs to have a completely different ending. If you're confused, try reading the book; perhaps you can explain it to me one day!

The biggest plus point in this books favour is its *rock on* characterisation, both of the regulars and the guest cast. This is some of the most memorable characterisation we have seen in a while with the trio of supporting characters, Bamford, Andrews and Griffiths emerging as a bunch and well worth taking your with to examine all the nuances Simon Guerrier writes them with.

Much of *The Time Travellers* hinges on lost time traveller Andrews and his duplicates. His old-fashioned lingo and reluctance to save himself marks him out as quite the hero. Given his characters' fates several times over it is easy to sympathise with him, and especially with the original version as he meets up with the Doctor and co and discovers the will to fight back against the regime that is killing him over and over again.

With Bamford we are afforded a rare opportunity to see a character from two very different perspectives, highlighting how changing time can change your personality in subtle but ultimately dramatic ways. The mean, fastidious, callous Bamford trying to keep Britain in one piece is a real nasty piece of work, terrifying in her lack of interest in seeing vagrants shot to death. She just gives the orders, completely immune to the death going on around her. Seeing the book through her eyes we see how bad things have become in this

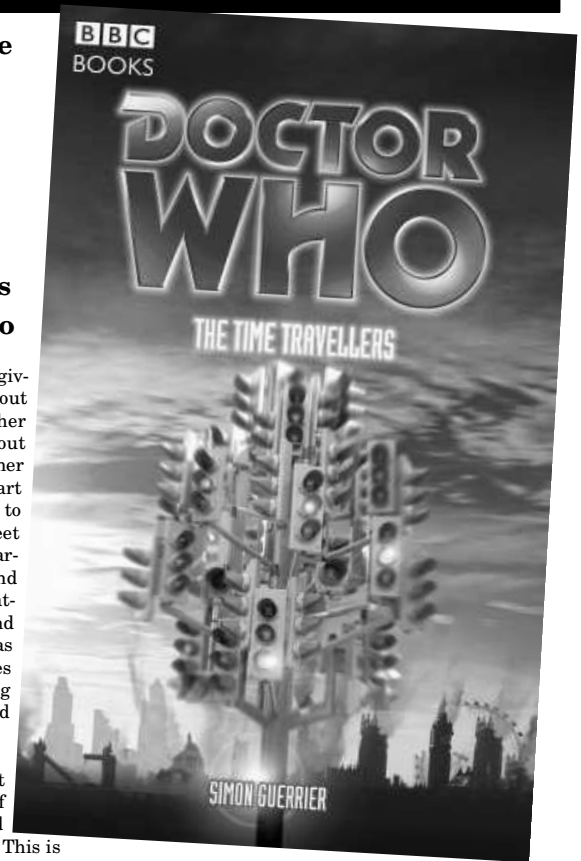
“Popular in recent years are books with an extremely complicated non-linear narrative but *The Time Travellers* has just enough explanations to guide you effortlessly through its pages without turning your brain to

terrifying version of the future, nobody much giving a toss about the loss of life, just caring about dealing with the enemy. One scene that sees her at the tip of the Canary Wharf tower looking out at the bombs raining down and recognising her lack of reaction because of her distance is heart breaking. What would it take for somebody to turn their back on their humanity? Later we meet up with a far more agreeable version of her character, one who befriends Ian and Barbara and wants to help to build a better future. Fascinating to see how two people can be the same and yet so different and amazing to think that it was only one act of kindness that saw their timelines take such different routes. This is like *Sliding Doors* but several shades more complex and interesting.

Guerrier already had an advantage with this set of regulars, probably the most perfect group of travellers to explore adventures in time and space the series has ever seen, forty years on. This is where *The Time Travellers* comes its own, thanks to the sparkling, thoughtful and touching moments between the regulars which really hammer home how much of a family they were without ever once having to see the words out loud.

I have rarely seen the first Doctor written this well for, his burning anger and cheeky arrogance captured so beautifully within the books pages. I could hear William Hartnell saying every single line and such was the strength of his dialogue I *wanted* to hear him saying every line. The book dares to play about with the rules set up in *The Aztecs* with scenes mirroring those between the Doctor and Barbara but this time the Doctor having to face up to the fact that he lied during their previous adventure and terrifying consequences of this novel proving why his initial condemnation of changing history was *so* vital. Not only that but Guerrier lays down hints that the Doctors people are after him and that he needs to find somewhere safe for Susan, that he regards Ian and Barbara as much more than just passengers and the frightening notion that despite these feelings he would still put protecting the timeline over their safety. He shines here, whether he is giggling at people's scientific ignorance, condemning them for their inhumanity or accepting his fate to be stranded in one time. His final chat with Ian by the TARDIS at the climax is absolutely tear jerking. It reminds me of what a fabulous character the first Doctor was and what an amazing actor William Hartnell was and what more can you ask from the book than that?

The Eleventh Tiger set up the romance between Ian and Barbara with a lot of subtlety and feeling and here we see the beginnings of their feelings towards each other. Frankly I would recommend this book on

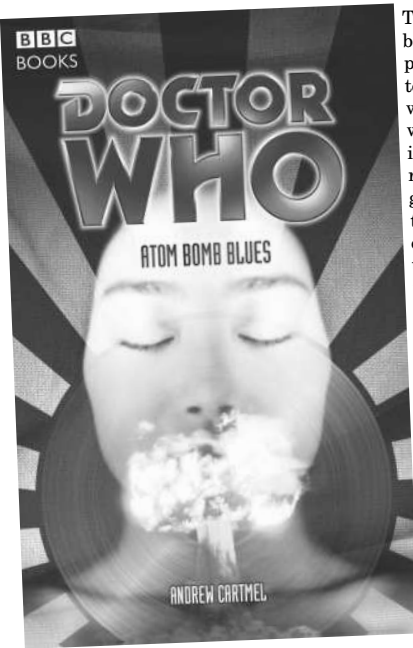


those scenes alone as the pair are written with absolute precision, Ian the reluctant hero forced to do things he would rather not think about and Barbara the headstrong mother of the group, desperate to look after the emotional well being of the group. They become closer than ever in this heartless environment and the moment when Barbara thinks Ian is *really* dead broke my heart. The books goes to great lengths to reveal the strength of feeling between them and is bookended with a pair of scenes that effectively see Ian mourn her loss *and* start a brand new life with her. Read the book to find out what I mean but it would appear no matter what has happened to history, Ian Chesterton will always love Barbara Wright and I can't think of a more fitting reminder of his character than that. Not only that but we are reminded what a hero the guy is, as he effectively sacrifices an entire lifetime to bring his fellow travellers home. Gah! What fantastic characters! It's made me want watch a Hartnell story!

A great setting, sizzling characterisation and a surprising, thoughtful plot, you couldn't really ask for more for the last PDA for a while. Should this turn out to be their swansong this is a fitting epitaph for a series of books, which, whilst not always perfect, has always tried to fresh and different. *The Time Travellers* is a winner whatever you want, heavy plot or heavy characterisation, and it shares the top spot with *Fear Itself* for the best PDA of the year. Despite my reservations during the first third that this would be just another alternative universe story, it actually feels refreshingly unlike those books that have already dealt with the theme and transcends itself into a beautiful character tale: 9/10

Reviewed by Joe Ford

atom bomb blues



Atom Bomb Blues is written by Andrew Cartmel who should be well known to Who fans for being the script editor on the McCoy era a team he uses in this very book he also wrote the **Dark Trilogy** for the New Adventures in the nineties as well as writing an audio

This could be the last past Doctor novel we get in a while and it's a rather good one to finish on. I hope this is not the case because I really like the past Doctor range. If truth be known I used to buy more Past Doctor novels than 8th Doctor ones.

for Big Finish the *Winter for the Adept* and the novella *Foreign Devils*.

The TARDIS lands the seventh Doctor and Ace in New Mexico in 1944 the second World War is coming to a close in the American deserts test are taking place to build an atom bomb the fate of the world is at stake someone or something is trying to alter the course of history as well as destroy the human race.

The Doctor and Ace pose as a nuclear scientist and his assistant the Doctor plays detective among the Manhattan project scientists while at the same time trying to stay out of trouble as the minutes tick away to the worlds first atom bomb blast. The Doctor and Ace find themselves up to their necks in spies, aliens from another world and some very dangerous opponents from another dimension.

Andrew Cartmel's first novel for the BBC book range is excellent it's fair to say though to pick the seventh Doctor and Ace to tell his story is rather easy after all he script edited most of the adventures on TV and wrote three books using the same pair for the Virgin range. However, the Doctor that Cartmel presents us with is not the arch manipulator of the TV series but a strange mix of the man we see in the TV movie and something of the comedic seventh Doctor we see in Season 24.

Cartmel also picks a familiar time period to tell his story in that of WWII the 7th Doctor must have been busy during this period what with the *Curse of Fenric*, *Colditz* and one of the early Timewyrm books

The TARDIS lands the 7th Doctor and Ace in New Mexico in 1944 the second World War is coming to a close in the American deserts test are taking place to build an Atom Bomb

taking place in different periods of WWII. The writers prose is really easy to read this time round I have read other Cartmel books particularly the **Dark trilogy** which I found to be hard work the characters are really well written the two that stand out are Cosmic Ray and Major Butcher there's even a guest appearance by big band leader Duke Ellington another cherry on the cake for me as I love stories where the Doctor meets famous faces from history.

An excellent book then to finish the past Doctors range. I hope this is not the last we see of this range I for one will miss it. 8/10

Reviewed by Ben Brown

the stealer of dreams

This BBC ninth Doctor book marks the end of the Novel range for the ninth Doctor. Albeit a short run the ninth Doctor books mostly managed to capture the feel and pace of the new TV series.

Steve Lyons is a very experienced writer when it comes to Doctor Who, having written ten other novels as well as some non-fiction material.

The Novel focuses on the effects of TV and the balance of whether it's a good or a bad thing to not allow people to dream.

The Stealers of Dreams manages to encompass the moral issues between enough fiction and too much fiction as well as the influence of television, and executes it perfectly.

Not only is this book brilliantly written with Steve Lyons' usual memorable characterisations, but builds up clearly in a relatively short novel the new community in which this novel is set.

Although the world this is set on is an Earth colony in the far future, the subject matter means that this adds to the feel of the story as the reader can relate to what is happening more, especially with this book being more

adult in nature than most of the NDA's.

This novel raises the morality of the state of television, as well as why it is important to not limit people from having ideas. It helps show the possibilities of what could happen in a future if things change so much that people start to believe that fiction is dangerous.

The Stealers of Dreams manages to encompass the moral issues between enough fiction and too much fiction as well as the influence of television, and executes it perfectly.

When it comes down to it *The Stealers of Dreams* is a gripping book that has a moral to tell and to show that the line between reality and fiction is extremely thin helping to prove that fiction is important because it helps creativity and ideas that society needs in order to progress.

The Stealers of Dreams is one of the best NDA's as it not only manages to capture the feel and pace of the new series, but also has Steve Lyons' reflective writing making it not only an insight into moral issues and a very enjoyable read but something that both classic and new series Doctor Who fans will love. 10/10

Reviewed by Claire Chaplin



THE DOCTOR WHO PROJECT

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The Doctor Who Project (TDWP) is the multiple award winning Canadian Doctor Who fiction series based on the long-running BBC science-fiction television series *"Doctor Who"*. TDWP centers on the continuing adventures of an alternate Doctor and his companions. Stories are published as part of an overall season that concentrates on delivering a collection of short stories that sees the Doctor facing new and original situations in time and space.



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the gallifrey chronicles

This BBC Eighth Doctor book brings and end to the ongoing EDA range. It was always going to be hard to wrap up all the different plot lines plus leaving it open for the new series.

Aptly Lance Parkin who wrote *The Dying Days* for Vargin's NA range – the first novel to feature the Eighth Doctor, also writes this, the Eighth Doctor's final story.

The Novel focuses on the Eighth Doctor's memory loss and it's cause plus the effects of the destruction of Gallifrey from **The Ancestor Cell**.

The Gallifrey Chronicles manages to tie up most of the remaining continuity strands, as well as giving a very good explanation for the Doctor's memory loss and gives a great opening for bringing Gallifrey back into existence.

Not only is this book brilliantly descriptive, it gives some of the most profound points in a Doctor Who book by the way of dialogue – The Doctor's speech about making decisions, and also about books being real. Plus some of the most memorable, most imaginative, best ways to sum up the moralities of the Doctor and precisely what makes Doctor Who Doctor Who.

Not only does the **Gallifrey Chronicles** enable Galli-

It is primarily a story of morals, rights and wrongs, while still managing to tell a story in classic style Doctor Who and tie up the EDA's ongoing continuity.

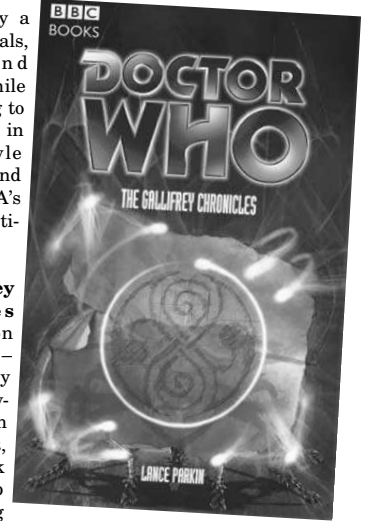
frey to come back and give a nice farewell to the 8th Doctor to make way for the new series, it also has a stand-alone story as well as a sub-plot. The plot of the Vores invading is very much in the background for a lot of the book, which helps the novel progress with tying up continuity strands and also throwing into question the credibility of the Doctors memory loss. Rachel and Marnel give the reader an insight into how the few remaining Time Lords react to the Doctor and throws the question of whether he made the right decision.

The sub-plot of Trix and Fitz's romance could've got lost in amongst the continuity strands but the way in which this book is written, with some brilliant description, makes this one of the most memorable EDAs.

It is primarily a story of morals, rights and wrongs, while still managing to tell a story in classic style Doctor Who and tie up the EDA's ongoing continuity.

The Gallifrey Chronicles succeeds on every level – not only by being an enjoyable story in its own right, but a book that sums up everything

that Doctor Who is about, gives the best attempt at tying up continuity strands ready for the new series, and gives the 8th Doctor range the brilliant ending that it deserved. **10/10**



Reviewed by Claire Chaplin

pier pressure



Robert Ross' latest release, *Pier Pressure*, has all the winning attributes of his first story, *Medicinal Purposes*, and yet, the same fatal weaknesses that undermined it. Strong and atmospheric setting, great Doctor/companion combination and an interesting villain are the standout elements of *Pier Pressure*. However, like *Medicinal Purposes*, very little of any interest actually occurs, and what does occur creaks along at a soporific speed designed to induce sleep in the unwary.

The setting is Brighton, 1936 and the Doctor and Evelyn fall in with Max Miller, real life comedian whose shtick was risqué comedy. Roy Hudd does a sterling job as Miller, his worn voice a real contrast to the younger, sleeker tones of many of the casts which

populate most BF plays. There's a sense of natural, effortless acting here from Hudd, who, not surprisingly, regards Miller as a hero. Also joining them are Billy (Martin Parsons), a young actor friend of Miller, and two young sweethearts, Emily Bung (Sally Curran) and Albert Potter (Chris Simmons). When mysterious lights and noises are heard, and linked with past disappearances and deaths, the Doctor's interest is piqued. Soon, the party face and ancient evil set on conquering the world, with the help of a broken down illusionist seeking power and influence.

The main problem I had with this play was the threat and the pacing of the story. The threat, in the guise of Professor Talbot (former Pinhead actor Doug Bradley), embodies the same ordinariness which we saw in Leslie Phillips Dr Knox, in *Medicinal Purposes*. There's nothing wrong with the villain of the piece embodied in a failed music hall entertainer, but if the audience are to be committed to what they're listening to, then the level of threat had better be something more menacing than Professor Talbot suddenly changing his voice to something nastier when the creature inhabiting him manifests itself.

The pacing. The inevitable 'problem' as it were, with audio, is the lack of visuals to generate pace. That's obvious, and generally good writers can get around it with plenty of action, strong writing, and an ability to move the story from one scene to the other at the right moment. Sadly, whether through design or not, Ross hasn't been able to do this. Instead of action based story with flashes of humor, we get a lumbering, flat footed marathon that goes on and on and on and on. Every scene is filled to the brim with talk. Ross wrings every last possible discussion point out of every actor in every scene of this story. Conversations drown *Pier Pressure*. Characters talk to each other

The main problem I had with this play was the threat and the pacing of the story.

about everything bar the problems they face, and when they exhaust that line of discussion, move onto the problem, and proceed to talk themselves white in the face. The Doctor (and this is a problem I've noted recently with other Big Finish plays featuring Davison and McGann) starts talking about himself in the most boringly maudlin tones that my teeth and toes started curling. Yes, we know your 1000 years old, and yes, we know you claim to have seen everything, and yes we know that sometimes you don't know why you bother, and of course it's nice to mourn the death of someone young and innocent, but for the love of God, shut up about it and get on with defeating the enemy!

For those who have read Simon Catlow's article in the latest Shockeye's Kitchen, where one of his arguments is that BF have failed to embrace the new, pacier storytelling demonstrated by the new series, *Pier Pressure* will have them nodding their heads in agreement. There's nothing inherently wrong with the story – the performances are believable, the sound design is amazingly evocative and Ross knows his 1930s film and stage history, but in the light of the new series, *Pier Pressure* is a ponderous, floundering beast that should've been knocked back before the commissioning phase. **5/10**

Reviewed by Robert Mammone

the leisure hive



The 18th season of DOCTOR WHO was one of change and innovation. After the rather tired and cheap-looking Season 17 from the very first second of the new opening titles THE LEISURE HIVE made the unsuspecting viewer sit up straight and exclaim "Wow!!!" a phrase which we would keep exclaiming for the following 28 weeks.

THE LEISURE HIVE is a superb choice for a DVD release. The story, like the season of which it was a part oozed style, finesse and elegance. It succeeds in every respect. For us long-term fans it gives us a razor sharp, crystal clear edition of the first story of one of the programme's epoch-marking seasons alongside seasons 5, 7, 13 and 21, and for younger fans and newcomers it is a chance to see how the programme used its minimal budget to superb effect.

The story is a business related one of a Mafiosi style group of aliens wishing to take over the famous Leisure Hive on the war-ravaged planet of Argolis. It could have come straight from the pen of Robert Holmes but is instead the work of David Fisher. The story moves at a cracking pace thanks to the innovative direction of Lovett Bickford, one of the best and most underrated directors in the series long history. Bickford casts his story superbly with notable British character actors as Adrienne Corri as Mena, the new Chairman of the Leisure Hive following the death of her husband Morix (Laurence Payne) David Haig as their scheming son Pangol, the child of the Tachyon generator, and Nigel Lambert as the Earth scientist Hardin, a specialist in the field of tachyonics. The design on all fronts, sets, costumes and make up are superb.

If the story has one fault is it that the monsters, the reptilian fomasi are not really scary or threatening. Indeed they come over as rather cute and one cannot

help but suspect that they would make excellent pets.

As always, the DVD extras are superb. The documentary A NEW BEGINNING centres very much upon the changes made to the series by the then new producer John Nathan-Turner. Here JN-T does come across as something of an egotist, though one who cared very much about the programme and wanted what was best for it. Barry Letts and script editor Christopher H Bidmead make it clear that JN-T was not very good in the field of story and Narrative even though he himself thought he was. It becomes clear that JN-T's relationship with Tom Baker was nothing more than business-like. JN-T succeeded in bringing Baker's excesses to heel.

Director Lovett Bickford is a charming, talented and modest man who enjoyed a workman-like relationship with Tom Baker though Bickford confesses that Baker could be a hard man to work with, a fact borne out by studio footage showing Baker arguing quite fiercely against some of Bickford's ideas. Both here and in a later documentary on the disc costume designer June Hudson speaks of both JN-T's and Bickford's enthusiasm both for her designs for the Argolins and for Tom Baker's new burgundy coloured costume.

Mention is made of the first use of Qantel, a process which Bickford states can now be done on your average home PC in about half an hour but back in 1980 was a very new, time consuming and costly effect which needed its own suite for working in. It said that the use of this expensive process is what c

ARGOLIS TO AVALON (Avalon being apparently, the original name for the Leisure hive itself) is a superb interview with the story's author, David Fisher. Fisher had submitted THE LEISURE HIVE with a lot more humour contained within it than JN-T and Christopher H Bidmead actually wanted to use within their vision of the programme and most of which they removed, a fact which does not go down well with Fisher who makes it clear that he didn't enjoy working with JN-T and as he had done in the NEW BEGINNING documentary again reiterates that JN-T had very little grasp of narrative form. Fisher also reveals how it was suggested to him, by a fan of the series that he carry out research into tachyonics and other scientific fields to aid his writing There are also revelations of minor conflicts between David Fisher and the series new Script editor Christopher H Bidmead, a learned intelligent, but very warm and likeable man of whom I hope we shall see and hear more when other season 18 stories, as well as those he wrote himself are released.

SYNTHESISING STARFIELDS has graphics designer Sid Sutton and composer Peter Howell talking about the design and creation of the series new starfield title sequence and here it is a delight to see albeit briefly, some of Sutton's earlier ideas for the new sequence innovated because JN-T felt that the time tunnel sequence which had been in use since episode one of ROBOT in 1974 was now looking dated. Peter Howell reveals that JN-T wanted the new version of theme to have a sort of dance feel to it and the development of the new theme is shown in part through clips of a 1982 series (which one assumes was a schools programme) on which Howell featured with effects designer Matt Irvine.

In LEISURE WEAR, costume designer, the stylish and charming June Hudson who for all the world resembles closely the doyenne of British cookery writers, Marguerite Patten talks with warmth and enthusiasm about the creation of the Argolans gold costumes. June states that she wanted the Argolins to have a gold colour as it was the colour of money and went out and bought originally four rolls of this gold coloured material for the outer robes, whilst the inners of the costumes were made of Spandex.

June realised that the Fomasi were essentially businessmen but she didn't want to give them ordinary suits. She loved what she describes as the plum colour of the Doctor's new costume but states that she was not happy about the question mark motif which appeared in one form or another on every Doctor's costume from THE LEISURE HIVE to SURVIVAL in 1989 and thus she incorporated it into her design as discreetly as she could. Hudson speaks warmly of JN-T speaking as she does of his enthusiasm both for the programme and for her designs; an enthusiasm shared by Lovett Bickford whom she praises warmly and by Tom Baker who she says was appreciative of her designs. Many designers have said that Lalla Ward was a very difficult client during her time on the programme but Hudson seemed to have no such problem and says that she wanted Romana's outfit in this story to have a 'cheeky' look about it. There is much to enjoy on this DVD but LEISURE WEAR is a particular highlight and I for one, hope that we shall of the pleasure of hearing more of the wonderful June Hudson's stories and reminiscences on future DVD releases.

The most annoying extra on the DVD is an item from the BBC children's magazine programme BLUE PETER with one of its then presenters Tina Heath taking a rather condescending and patronising look at the Longleat exhibition whilst meeting incoming producer (as he was then) John Nathan-Turner who tries not to give anything away about the coming season except to talk about a monster which 'attacks human's faces' one can only think that he is talking about either the Marsh Spiders from FULL CIRCLE or the Vampire bats from STATE OF DECAY. Whatever, this particular item can be very easily glossed over.

The commentary, by Lalla Ward who played the Doctor's companion, Romana, script editor, Christopher H Bidmead and director, Lovett Bickford is relaxed, laid back and I must admit rather unremarkable but as all three participants are themselves extremely likeable, it still remains enjoyable.

The photo gallery is passable but like so many of its kind, is composed solely of images we have seen time and time again. Peter Howell's incidental music as an isolated track is a nice feature but unless one has something particularly special such as a score by Paddy Kingsland, it just goes to prove that incidental music serves the purpose of accompanying the scenes, which it is intended to do so rather than to be listened to in isolation.

THE LEISURE HIVE is for me one of the very best DVD releases to date, not just because the story itself contains so much innovation and that it is a particular favourite, but also because it contains some of the very best extras to appear on any DOCTOR WHO DVD release to date, almost every item is an absolute gem. If you are merely thinking about buying this release, then don't think about it, go out and buy it, you won't be disappointed. 8/10

Reviewed by Gary Phillips

the deviant strain



contradict as if she can, then why, in ROSE did she get Mickey to drive her over to Clive Finch's? Surely she could have just borrowed his car and driven herself maybe? No, the big problem of characterisation here - is Captain Jack. At times Richards almost succeeds in capturing the humour and charm of John Barrowman's TV portrayal, For the most part here, Jack comes over as bland, dull and characterless. This isn't the charismatic con-man and reluctant hero that we fans grew to love over the latter five episodes of Season one. Mind you, if one is correct in surmising that THE DEVIANT STRAIN was both commissioned and written before Richards had a chance to see anything of John Barrowman's stunning portrayal or gain any idea from the Production Office of how Jack would come over on screen Richards, rather like Pip and Jane Baker in writing TIME AND THE RANI for TV were writing for a character he hadn't yet seen and therefore can be forgiven for his faux pas. Another issue which is certainly how of character here and which adds to the coldness of Richard's interpretation is the complete lack of Jack's ability to chat up the first good

looking man he sets eyes on.

The DEVIANT STRAIN is a horror/suspense story ala THE HORROR OF FANG ROCK crossed with a 1970s or 80s Cold War thriller set in 21st century Russia, in a coastal town that used to be a military port back in the Soviet heyday but is now a decaying fishing village where old submarines go to die. A military squad has been called in to investigate some strange happenings locally. Not long after the squad arrive, the Doctor, Rose and Jack turn up, investigating that popular sci fi cliché, an alien distress signal. From hereonin, THE DEVIANT STRAIN becomes a tale of crashed alien spaceships, weird villagers seeking immortality (I can hear Philip Latham as Borusa this far away!!!) by stealing "life force" from other people, and nasty blob-like creatures on the rampage.

Richards handles The Doctor and Rose superbly, The ninth Doctor is handled superbly and it is the highlight of what in many ways is a mediocre book that you can almost hear Christopher Eccleston and Billie Piper saying their dialogue as you read...

Rose is in great form here, wanting to get involved as best she can. It will be interesting to see if this novel's revelation that Rose can drive a car is something that the series itself will

Richards has a rather odd, yet ultimately successful technique of overemphasising and constant highlighting small details that turn out to be important from *The Clockwise Man* returns here, too, leaving the reader with no doubt at all as to doubt who the villains of the piece actually are before their eventual unmasking. Is it Sofia Barinska, Richards describes Barinska as "*Having a face that looks like some grotesque grinning skull when it's illuminated in a certain way*" puts one in mind of the hag-like SMERSH operative, Rosa Klebb from Ian Fleming's FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE. Or could it be Klebanov, who everyone keeps saying is older than he looks? Here again, Klebanov puts one in mind of the Chess Champion assassin, Kronstein, from the Fleming Novel. The Russian setting is used well and the sense of isolation and desolation puts one in mind once again of The Fang Rock Lighthouse from THE HORROR OF FANG ROCK and also of Agatha Christie's suspense novel AND THEN THERE WERE NONE (although DEVIANT STRAIN never quite succeeds in reaching the gripping heights of Dame Agatha's *tour de force*).

Richard's villains are so bland and one dimensional as to hardly being worth mentioning. The story moves at a decent enough pace. The

Richard's villains are so bland and one dimensional as to hardly being worth mentioning.

main problem is that the story lacks any substance at all the monsters are forgettable, the plot is far more 1950s B Movie spy yarn than John Le Carre clone, the characters are all too easy to forget whereas those in THE CLOCKWISE MAN stick in the mind, this lot are immediately forgettable. The monsters are silent big blue blobby glowing creatures that wobble about a lot but never actually hit anyone. Up to a point they remind one rather of Omega's gell guards from the THREE DOCTORS who just wobbled about in UNIT's back garden for ten minutes, crossed with a Rutan.

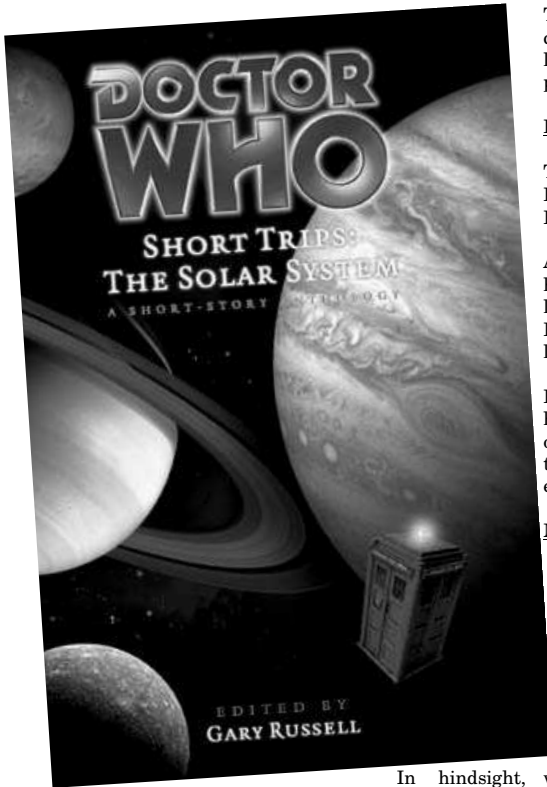
The ending is very rushed indeed with a big bang and everything's ok again. One is reminded of the climaxes of the James Bond films YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE and THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN, although Lewis Gilbert and Guy Hamilton were more successful in achieving on film what Richards fails to do in words. One gets the distinct impression that Richards was getting bored with the thing and not really bothered. By this time, neither was I!!!!

The Deviant Strain tries but never actually succeeds. The misinterpretation of Jack spoils the relationship of the three main characters and if Richards is attempting to create a cold war thriller for the 21st century then frankly, he's failed!!!! The supporting characters are dull and the villains cheap James Bondian clones who would have both Ian Fleming and Albert R Broccoli turning in their graves!!! THE CLOCKWISE MAN was a great read, one of the best WHO books in years, but this is bland to the point of tedium despite a few good points.

Indeed this second trio of ninth Doctor adventures seem a very poor relation to the first set and this is the weakest of the lot. Justin Richards is a fine writer when he wants to be, but here he rather than coming over as a young Len Deighton, comes across as Terrance Dicks in late 70s churn-em-out mode. THE DEVIANT STRAIN is a valiant effort but if you are thinking of buying it, my best advice is to leave your money in your pocket. /10

Reviewed by Gary Phillips

short trips: the solar system



In hindsight, using the planets of our solar system for a linked short story collection is such an obvious idea that it is quite surprising that it hasn't been used before in the Big Finish series. Having said that, there is little obvious about the stories presented here. Each gives an interesting take on its subject and on the whole uses both regulars and 'guest' characters well.

To best illustrate my thoughts on this collection, I should take each story in turn and review them separately. So here goes...

Mercury (by Eddie Robson)

This story pops the Second Doctor, Jamie and Zoe down on the night side of the planet closest to the Sun. Here they discover human scientists and a strange creature seems to need heat to function.

Author Eddie Robson captures the regulars quite well throughout. While his own creations don't get a great deal of depth, that is the downside of the short story, there often isn't time to develop new characters.

The situation is well presented and thought out and the resolution is satisfying in its simplicity.

A good start..7/10

Venus (by Stuart Manning)

The Doctor and Charley Pollard finds themselves on a ship that is about to get a closer than usual view of Earth's closest neighbour.

Stuart Manning breathes life into the Big Finish audio team of the Eighth Doctor and Charley with assurance, handling their banter and friendship neatly. His own characters are also well drawn and given a degree of motivation.

The story itself works well and is painted on a broad canvas (pardon the pun). Its sad without being maudlin, with an inevitability about the ending that is perfectly pitched. 9/10

Earth (by Jim Mortimore)

Taking a young man from 1939 into the far future, the Doctor finds an unexpected solution to the final war on Earth.

At first, Jim Mortimore's story is annoying to read, as his 'replacement' companion, Jake, talks in a vernacular of 1930's America that is difficult to understand. But the story is worth sticking with, even if it is the longest of the bunch.

His vision of a future Earth run by the ants and with humans kept as cattle is certainly up there with some of the oddest ever seen in Doctor Who. And the resolution is clever, as is to be expected from such an experienced scribe. 8.5/10

Mars (by Trevor Baxendale)

As Steven mount a heroic rescue, the Doctor and Vicki find they may have to effect their own rescue of their companion.

Trevor Baxendale has a number of Doctor Who novels to his credit, but he manages to pack plenty of drama into just a few pages this time around. Even though the reader knows all is going to turn out well, there is still a degree of suspense along the way.

Again, as with most of the stories, the TARDIS team are well characterised, with the Doctor's obvious upset at the prospect of losing a companion very well played.

Good stuff. 9/10

Jupiter (by Andy Russell)

Down in the depths of Jupiter's atmosphere, something is stirring. It is up to the Doctor, Evelyn and an atmospheric dredger crew to discover whether or not it is hostile.

This is a superior adventure for another BF audio team, namely the Sixth Doctor and Evelyn Smythe. Their relationship is superbly captured by author Andy Russell, who also manages to inject sufficient backstory into his own creations to give them well-rounded personalities. All this and an interesting plot in a short story is quite an achievement.

In my opinion, this is the best of a pretty good bunch. 9.5/10

Saturn (by Alison Lawson)

The Doctor and Nyssa find themselves in a supposedly idyllic society. However, the Time Lord soon discovers that the only crime in this future is to be old...

A thought provoking story this time, from author Alison Lawson. We are presented with a seemingly perfect social structure, but one that comes with a price. The old are shipped off to do menial labour when they reach 100 and the young don't join the society until they hit 20. An interesting prediction of our possible future!

Well put together, with a good plot and characters. 8/10

"This is a very good set of short stories, well told and characterised."

Uranus (by Craig Hinton)

The Doctor has brought Mel into the future to witness an event that will give birth to an amazing new life form. But first they have to thwart the saboteurs and meddlers from another dimension

Another interesting and well plotted story from Who veteran Craig Hinton. He's even managed to sneak in a few of those continuity references he enjoys so much. Plus, the story reminded me of something else, another story that I'm afraid, at time of writing, I still can't quite recall. But I'm sure it will come back to me someday! 8/10

Neptune (by Richard Dinnick)

Discovering a colony of peaceful alien artists on the planet Neptune, the Doctor and Sarah are surprised to also find that somebody is determined to destroy the aliens.

After such a run of interesting and quality stories, I suppose it couldn't last. And while writer Richard Dinnick gives us a fascinating society, very little seems to happen within the confines of the story. Maybe this is down to the fact it is linked to the final tale in the book, but it feels like it is only half completed. Disappointing. 6/10

Pluto (by Dale Smith)

Ben and Polly, accompanied by the newly regenerated Doctor, find a jungle where no jungle should be. Then there is the dead body...

Set just after Power of the Daleks, author Dale Smith plays up on Ben's doubts about the new Doctor, before finally having him accept that he really is who he says he is.

This is a bit of a bleak story, but it does its job well, telling a good tale along the way and keeping the reader guessing as to the nature of the threat. The ending is a little enigmatic, but that can be forgiven. This time. 7.5/10

Sedna (by Andy Frankham)

Taking a trip to the edge of the solar system, the Doctor and Jeremy Fitzoliver discover a colony of alien artists, who are intent on making war on their own kind living on Neptune. Then the Doctor realises he has seen this conflict before...

Sadly, like the other half of this story, this tale doesn't quite work. Which is a shame as these two stories do tend to let down the other eight presented in this collection. Much of the suspense that could have been generated by a stand-alone story is lost because we know what is happening elsewhere in the solar system. Again, disappointing. 6/10

In conclusion, this is a very good set of short stories, well told and characterised. I would enjoy reading more solar system based tales. Overall Rating – 9 out of 10

Reviewed by Mark Simpson

short trips: the history of christmas

Editor Simon Guerrier manages to cram twenty four stories into the 231 pages of *The History of Christmas*, making it a collection of more variable quality than the previous book, *The Solar System*, which contained just ten. However, the majority of the stories presented in this volume are of a higher than average quality, which does compensate.

Given so many tales to review, I've decided to group them this time by rating, rather than give a detailed review of each individual short.

9 out of 10

Set in Stone (by Charles Auchterlonie and John Isles) – I must admit to a little bias with this 1st Doctor story, as I've known the two authors online for some years. But even without that, this is a very well constructed and told tale of a Christmas mystery.

Christmas on the Moon (by Simon Guerrier) – A superior 6th Doctor and Evelyn Smythe story from the collection editor himself. Well characterised and set, with an interesting alien life form thrown in.

The Gift (by Robert Dick) – A nicely told first Doctor tale, with good use of dialogue between the three main characters involved in the drama. Good use of continuity.

Callahuanca (by Richard Salter) – Sweet little 4th Doctor time travel tale, well drawn and effectively told throughout. A satisfying, feel good read.

8.5 out of 10

Rome (by Marcus Flavin) – Very good use of the regulars (5th Doctor, Tegan and Turlough) and of the author's own creations in ancient Rome. I also suspect the author name might be made up!

Comforts of Home (by Pete Kemshall) – Another excellent 5th Doctor story, this time accompanied just by Turlough. Sad though effective use of the American Civil War period.

She Won't Be Home (by Joseph Lidster) – Very clever 6th Doctor solo tale from Big Finish stalwart Joe Lidster. Never quite goes where you expect it to, which is as a story should be told.

8 out of 10

The Feast (by Stewart Sheargold) – Neat little story which uses its historical setting (Cromwell's England) and regulars (2nd Doctor, Ben and Polly) well.

Presence (by Peter Anghelides) – Effective tale using the Big Finish team of the 7th Doctor, Ace and Hex, each getting their own slice of the

action. Good contrast also between the two timelines.

The Prodigal Sun (by Matthew Griffiths) – Entertaining story using the 4th Doctor and Leela helping a clan of post-Roman Britons.

Not in My Back Yard (by Eddie Robson) – Very good 8th Doctor short using some elements from the early Virgin New Adventures canon, along with the Brigadier.

7.5 out of 10

Be Good For Goodness' Sake (by Samantha Baker) – Well told story featuring the 8th Doctor's attempt to change the course of a young man's life.

The Innocents (by Marc Platt) – The only story that doesn't use a TV Doctor, this features the Big Finish Unbound pairing of alternative 1st Doctor and older Susan, travelling with Leonardo Da Vinci and a refugee family.

The Anchorite's Echo (by Scott Andrews) – Interesting though sad story, using the 7th Doctor and Ace to very good effect.

7 out of 10

Home Fires (by Jonathan Blum) – A life changing experience for a bitter man, delivered by an encounter with the 6th Doctor.

Danse Macabre (by Joff Brown) – Strange tale with an effective alien race and the presence of the Lord Nelson and the 3rd Doctor.

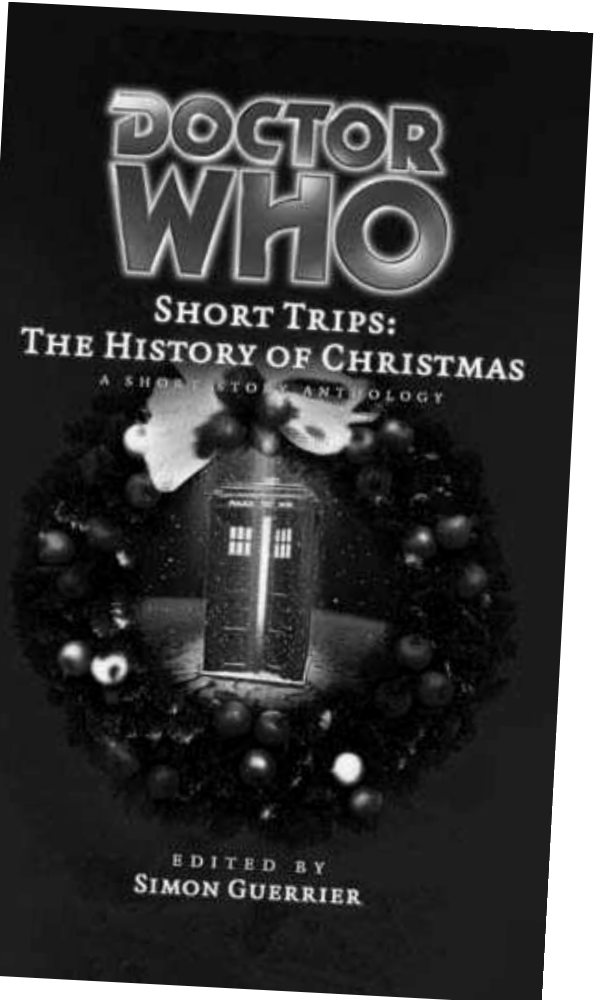
Ode to Joy (by Jonathan Clements) – Another odd story, but nicely told and using the 4th Doctor to good effect in modern Japan.

Nobody's Gift (by Kate Orman) – 7th Doctor short, using the mysterious side of this incarnation as a young man realises his destiny.

Saint Nicholas' Bones (by Xanna Eve Chown) – Interesting but slightly unbelievable story featuring the 2nd Doctor and Victoria, as the Time Lord keeps a promise.

The Long Midwinter (by Philip Burser-Hallard) – A bizarre culture living on a star are visited by the 8th Doctor, with BF companions Gemma and Samson (from the audio story *Terror Firma*).

6.5 out of 10



The Revolutionaries (by John S. Drew) – Odd little time travel story using the 2nd Doctor and Jamie as they come to the aid of George Washington!

6 out of 10

The Lampblack Wars (by Matthew Sweet) – Strange and unsatisfying story of intelligent ink, with the 3rd Doctor and Sarah Jane Smith.

The Thousand Years of Christmas (by Simon Bucher-Jones) – Dull but mercifully short 3rd Doctor and Jo yarn, as the Time Lord keeps another promise.

The Church of Saint Sebastian (by Robert Smith) – Out of character piece using the 5th Doctor and Nyssa of Traken in ancient Lebanon.

In conclusion, there are more hits than misses in this collection. None of the stories are worse than average really. Or is that just my Christmas spirit talking?

Reviewed by Mark Simpson

wildthyme on top



Who is Iris Wildthyme? Like the Doctor Iris travels through time and space in a rickety TARDIS that would appear incongruous in virtually any setting—in the Doctor's case, a 1960s Police Box, in Iris' a red

Zone of Gallifrey—but it's possible that's she's something entirely else. Big Finish's recent anthology, *Wildthyme on Top*, is the first collection of Iris adventures sans the Doctor and launches their New Worlds imprint of *Doctor Who* spin-off stories.

Essentially, think of *Wildthyme on Top* as a *Doctor Who* anthology with the serial numbers filed off, but with stories that veer toward the magical-realism side of the literary equation rather than the Doctor's usual scientific-realism. Iris meets ghosts. Iris visits an Elizabethan-era inhabited moon where Queen Elizabeth I established an embassy. Iris finds herself drawn into pseudo-Narnian politics. The stories run a gamut from literary pastiche—Jac Rayner's "Iris and Irregularity"—to reality television—Justin Richards' "Most Horrid"—to high-concept fare. Could the Doctor have these adventures? It's possible, certainly, but without the lightly comedic touch Iris has. For the Doctor the problem of the lunar civilization in Philip Purser-Hallard's "Minions of the Moon" would be *how* this native lunar civilization came to be, while for Iris the question simply doesn't matter. Where the Doctor would scoff at the Narnia-like world of talking animals in Lance Parkin's "The Mancunian Candidate,"

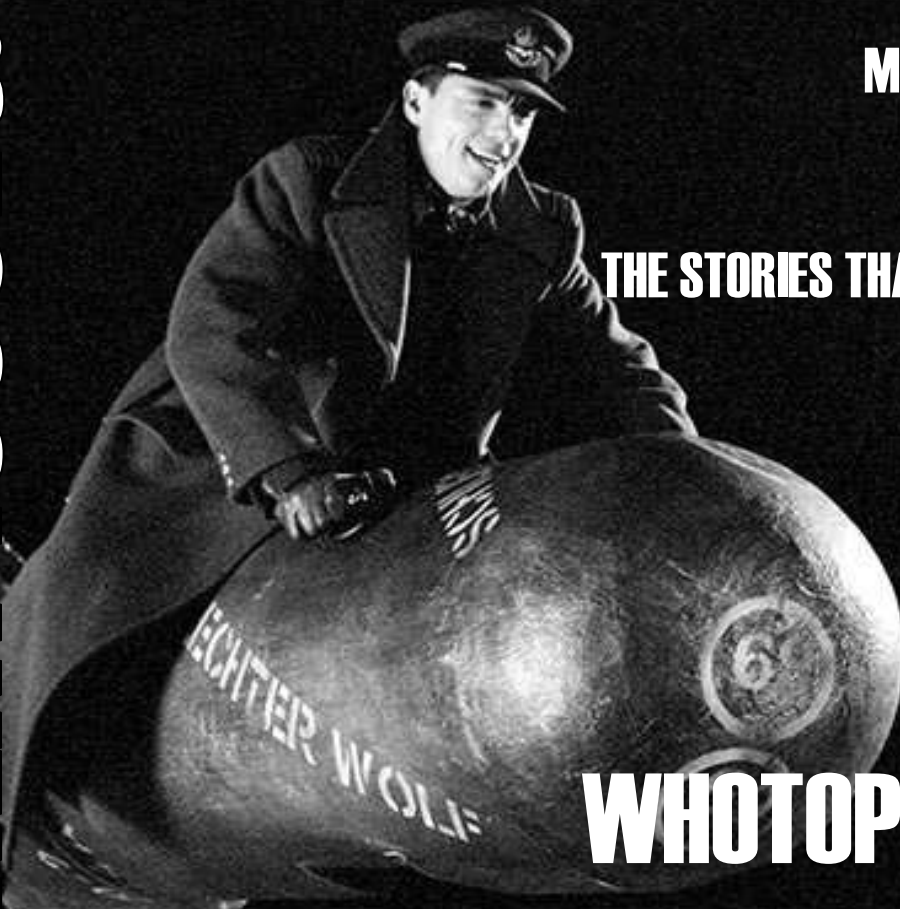
Essentially, think of *Wildthyme on Top* as a *Doctor Who* anthology with the serial numbers filed

Iris doesn't even bat an eyelash at the idea of squirrels running political campaigns. These stories *could* work for *Doctor Who*, but their focus would be different because the Doctor is a different character than Iris Wildthyme.

Is this a worthwhile anthology? That depends on the reader. There are some fine stories in the volume—Purser's in particular stands out—though the anthology's one failing is that it has no story by Iris' creator, Paul Magrs. Someone who liked Iris Wildthyme in her previous appearances may want to check this out. Someone who disliked the character, however, won't find their opinion altered. As for new readers, *Wildthyme on Top* would not be the best introduction to the character—for that check out the Big Finish audios *Excelis Dawns* or *The Wormery*, or the BBC novels *The Scarlet Empress* or *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*. **7/10**

Reviewed by Allyn Gibson

NEXT ISSUE



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